Poverty, Development and Inequality in Modern African History (A005115)

Due to Covid 19, the education and evaluation methods may vary from the information displayed in the schedules and course details. Any changes will be communicated on Ufora.

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2020-2021

Poverty, inequality, development, interdisciplinarity, comparisons.
• Provide well-founded, scientific knowledge and insights about African history and the impact of this history on mentalities, global relations and contemporary African societies.
• Broaden insights in historiographic methods and scientific methodology from other disciplines that are relevant to the field of African history
• Broaden knowledge about and insight in social theories relevant to the field of African history
• Set up historical research about Africa and apply knowledge and insights regarding African history and historiography on a scientific level.
• Communicating about research methods and results with fellow student and laymen
• Develop own critical, well-funded, scientific views on Africa within a temporal, spatial and social framework

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Poverty, inequality, development, interdisciplinarity, comparisons.

Position of the course

1. Provide well-founded, scientific knowledge and insights about African history and the impact of this history on mentalities, global relations and contemporary African societies.
2. Broaden insights in historiographic methods and scientific methodology from other disciplines that are relevant to the field of African history.
3. Broaden knowledge about and insight in social theories relevant to the field of African history.
4. Set up historical research about Africa and apply knowledge and insights regarding African history and historiography on a scientific level.
5. Communicating about research methods and results with fellow student and laymen.
6. Develop own critical, well-funded, scientific views on Africa within a temporal, spatial and social framework.

Contents

Poverty is one of the most salient features of African societies today, and poverty has also deeply shaped the way Africans have been perceived historically. But poverty is a less obvious problem than it seems, based on the fact that we all (think we) know it when we see it. It is fundamentally connected to inequality, and in the post-colonial
period, development has become the standard way to seek to address it. The course provides information on definitions of poverty and inequality, on the history of poverty in Africa, on its dynamics and changes, and the way different people coped with and sought to change it over time. It explores the distinctive problems of the Southern African region and the responses of different religious traditions, as well as the changing paradigms of development studies and critical anthropology of development.

**Initial competences**

It is recommended that students take this class when they have completed their BAs, as it involves a large and diverse amount of specialised literature in English. But advanced BA students in their final year should also find it useful.

**Final competences**

1. Learn about distinctive features and changes in the history of poverty and inequality in Africa, with some comparative information on Europe and the 'West'.
2. Learn about the history of development and different ways of explaining its limited impact in Africa.
3. Examine arguments about poverty from a variety of social science disciplines, including economics, anthropology, history and development studies.
4. Deal with both qualitative and quantitative methods.
5. Make connections between arguments from different disciplines and examine how they frame similar problems differently.
6. Recognise and examine different policy and political subtexts.

**Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'.

**Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract.

**Teaching methods**

Guided self-study, microteaching, self-reliant study activities, lecture: response lecture, online group work.

**Extra information on the teaching methods**

Students read texts, submit questions on them before class, and take turns to present commentary on the texts in class. Classes revolve around student discussion.

**Learning materials and price**

Library books, online journals, material provided on Minerva.

**References**

There isn't one relevant text, but Martin Ravallion, *The economics of poverty*, and John Iliffe, *The African poor*, are good places to start.

**Course content-related study coaching**

Some lecturing, guidance for in-class discussions and the preparation of students' contributions to class, provision of background on readings.

**Evaluation methods**

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period**

Open book examination

**Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period**

**Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation**

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation**

not applicable

**Extra information on the examination methods**

Students are assessed on participation in discussion, on their presentations, and
on a final exam.
The final exam is 'open book', i.e. students can take their readings and notes into the exam room. They will be asked to discuss a question on one of the topics of the course, set by the teacher, in the form of an essay.
Additional readings for the preparation of the essay will be provided via Minerva and the library.

Calculation of the examination mark
50% continual evaluation in class, 50% final exam.

Facilities for Working Students
1. Student attendance during weekly meetings is required.
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Alternative time for feedback is possible
For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy