

Lagos: The City Is...
BC 4791

Fall 2008 History Seminar
Th 4:10 – 6 p.m. Lehman 201

Instructor: Professor Abosedede George
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Hours: T, 1-3

Description:

Lagos: The City Is...

- the unofficial capital of Nigeria
- the go-slow capital of the world
- Rem Koolhaas' planning mystery
- George Packer's mega-city nightmare

Above all, as social scientist Margaret Peil once said, Lagos: The city is the people. At last count, over 15 million people to be (in)exact which makes Lagos the second most densely populated city in Africa. How does a city like Lagos come into being? What are its origins? What is its history in regional, continental, and global context? How does it 'work' and what work does it do for our understandings of cities, urbanization, urbanism, colonialism, globalization, trans-nationalism, and the spatial factor in Africanist historical analyses? This course examines the many Lagos that have existed over time, in space, and in the imagination from the city's origins to the 21st century. This is a reading, writing, viewing, and listening intensive course. We will be reading scholarly, policy-oriented, and popular sources on Lagos as well as screening films and audio recordings that feature Lagos in order to learn about the social, cultural, and intellectual history of this West African mega-city.

Texts:

Philip Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*. (2000)
Andrew Apter, *The Pan African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*. (2005)
Sandra Barnes, *Patrons and Power*. (1986)
Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City*. (2007)

Possible Texts;

Jane I. Guyer (ed.) *Feeding African Cities: essays in social history*

(Tell students where the JSTOR and e-reserves articles can be found. All may not be online by Thursday but should be online by the various due dates.)

Films:

Lagos/Koolhaas
Fela: Music is the Weapon
Lagos, Wide and Close

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken. Students are expected to appear on time every time class meets.

Requirements:

-Participation. Seminar participants must complete readings and screenings before each meeting and be prepared to participate actively in all seminar discussions.

-Weekly critical 2-3pg. commentaries to be submitted in class

A good commentary may include a quick summary of a reading or a set of readings, but a simple summary of the reading(s) does not itself constitute a good response paper. A good commentary is one that picks out and analyzes a point made in the reading(s) or suggested by the reading(s) that was particularly interesting or provocative to you. You should clearly state the subject of your analysis, provide evidence from the reading(s), and cite your sources using MLA format. Each commentary is worth up to 5 pts.

Commentaries are graded on a scale of 1-5. Late commentaries will not be accepted.

- In Class Presentation. Students are responsible for presenting each meeting's topic. Good presentations will include, but are not limited to providing, a larger framework within which to consider readings, critical evaluation of each reading, statement of key shared themes, and list of 3 -5 discussion points.

-1 seminar paper / project. Students must complete an original 10-15 page research paper on some aspect of the history of Lagos. Papers must be based on both primary and secondary sources. Students may also opt to complete a comparable creative project that deals with the topic of Lagos.

Evaluation Criteria

Attendance and Participation	30%
Commentaries/Presentations	40% <i>(On presentation days no comment)</i>
1 seminar paper/ project	30%

A+ / A / A- / B+ / B / B- / C+ / C / C- / D+ / D / Fail

To avoid unfair penalization, students who may need disability related accommodations are strongly encouraged to see the professor as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of classes. Students who need testing or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in 105 Hewitt.

Meeting 1
9/4

This Is Lagos: Contemporary Perspectives

Review course plans and policies
In-class screening: Lagos/Koolhaas

Meeting 2
9/11

[online] Will Connors, "Opulence and Chaos Meet in an African Boomtown"
NYT August 12, 2008

[online] George Packer, "The Megacity: Decoding the chaos of Lagos" The New Yorker November 13, 2006

Omolade Bamidele, "Beyond Yellow Buses" in Lagos: A City at Work.

[e-reserves]

Return to Lagos * by Godson Egbo * Part 1 & 2* www.bukka.org/writings/html

* commentary due / **PRESENTER**

** One paragraph paper / project proposal due

Display slide show using images from A City at Work and Eko or Old Lagos. Discuss images using Koolhaas concept of the "dense foreground."

Meeting 3
9/18

Theorizing Urban African History. I

[JSTOR] Allen M. Howard, "Cities in Africa, Past and Present: Contestation, Transformation, Discourse" Canadian Journal of African Studies Volume 7 Number 2/3 2003

* commentary due / *PRESENTER*

Meeting 4
9/25

Eko Origins

Saburi Biobaku, "Eko or Old Lagos" in Eko: Landmarks of Lagos, Nigeria.

[e-reserves]

Kunle Akinsemoyin and Alan Vaughn-Richards, Building Lagos. (1977) 1-52

[JSTOR] Spencer H. Brown, "Public Health in Lagos, 1850-1900: Perceptions, Patterns, and Perspectives" International Journal of African Historical Studies Vol. 25, No. 2 (1992): 337-360

*commentary due / *PRESENTER*

Meeting 5
10/2

Lagos and the Atlantic World

Kristin Mann, Slavery and the Birth of an African City, 1760- 1900

* commentary due / *PRESENTER*

Meeting 6
10/9

[JSTOR] Lisa Lindsay, "'To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland': Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Lagos," Slavery and Abolition 15 (1994): 22-50

[e-reserves] Olabiyi Yai, "The Identity, Contributions, and Ideology of the Aguda (Afro-Brazilians) of the Gulf of Benin: A Reinterpretation" in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay, eds., Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil.

[JSTOR] David A. Ross, "The Career of Domingo Martinez in the Bight of Benin 1833-64" The Journal of African History, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1965), pp. 79-90

[JSTOR] J. Lorand Matory, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation" Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), pp. 72-103

* commentary due / *PRESENTER*

** Annotated primary and secondary source bibliography. Must include at least 3 primary sources and 7 – 10 secondary sources.

Meeting 7
10/16

Colonial Lagos

[JSTOR] Robert Smith, "The Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861: An Outline" The Journal of African History, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1974), pp. 393-416

[e-reserves] Roberts Smith, ed., Memoirs of Giambattista Scala, Consul of His Italian Majesty in Lagos in Guinea (1862), translated from the Italian by Brenda Packman, selections. Intro, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10

[e-reserves] Patrick Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos excerpt TBD

* commentary due / *PRESENTER*

- Meeting 8
10/23 [JSTOR] Kristin Mann, "Marriage Choices among the Educated African Elite in Lagos Colony, 1880-1915" The International Journal of African Historical Studies
[JSTOR] Kristin Mann, "The Dangers of Dependence: Christian Marriage among Elite Women in Lagos Colony, 1880-1915" The Journal of African History, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1983), pp. 37-56
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
- Meeting 9
10/30 Philip Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas.
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
- Meeting 10
11/7 **Development Decades**
[JSTOR] Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920-1960"
[e-reserves] ---, "Urban Poverty, Urban Crime, and Crime Control: The Lagos and Ibadan Cases 1929-45" in Falola and Salm, African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective.
[JSTOR] Lisa Lindsay, "Domesticity and Difference: Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and Colonial Citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike," American Historical Review 104, 3 (1999): 783-812
[e-reserve] Rina Okonkwo, Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908 – 1930. Chpts 3,4,5,6
[e-reserve] Nina Mba, Nigerian Women Mobilized. Chapter VII
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
** First Draft of paper/project due. Be sure to workshop paper with writing fellow before handing it in.
- Meeting 11
11/14 **Lagos in the Era of Independence**
Cyprian Ekwensi, Jagua Nana / People of the City TBD
[e-reserve] Nnamdi Elleh, "Architecture and nationalism in Africa, 1945 -1994" in The Short Century curated by Okwui Enwezor
The Short Century. Architecture images pg. 246 – 277.
[e-reserve] Wolfgang Bender, "Independence, Highlife, Liberation Wars: Lagos 1950s and 1960s" in The Short Century
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
- Meeting 12
11/21 **Military Rule and Globalization**
Andrew Apter, The Pan African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria
Screening: Fela Kuti, Music Is The Weapon
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
- Meeting 13
12/4 Sandra Barnes, Patrons and Power
* commentary due / *PRESENTER*
Screening: Lagos/Wide and Close
- Exam Week Final version of paper / projects due.

