



CIEE Dakar, Senegal

Course name:	Contemporary Senegalese Society and Culture
Course number:	AFST 3003 SGSM
Programs offering course:	Language and Culture
Language of instruction:	French
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2018
Course meeting times:	Tuesdays –Thursdays, 2:30pm - 3:45pm
Course meeting place:	Jàppoo
Professor:	Idrissa Ba
Contact Information:	Idrissa Bâ, Professeur Associé en Histoire Médiévale
Office address:	Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar
Office hours:	By appointment

Course Description:

The course is a general overview of Senegalese society and culture. As an interdisciplinary course, it explores various aspects of the Senegalese society going from its foundations to the mutations of the political, economic, social, and family structures: rural vs. urban realities; religions and beliefs; health, education and cultural policies and women's roles. The course will focus on aspects that reflect the transmission of socio-cultural values or loss of thereof, despite stressed social rules and norms: mode, prostitution, skin lightening, food alienation, etc. In addition to lectures and discussions, we will use literature and film to look at various topics germane to Senegalese society and culture.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed to enable students to:

- Study different cultural and social aspects of Senegal
- Increase students' understanding and knowledge of contemporary Senegalese culture
- Be aware of current issues confronting the present social structure
- Explore ways to understand the culture through particular contexts
- Articulate critical questions about culture with the help of class discussions and assigned readings.
- Engage in critical thinking by exploring cultural assumptions

Course Prerequisites

Your regular attendance and active participation are of central importance for this course to provide you with both a satisfying and fun educational experience. Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings assigned for that day and prepared to question and discuss the issues. Students are to be open-minded and ready to experience and explore new ideas and contexts. It is more productive to formulate good ideas, questions and to explore the possibilities for issues than to think we have to come up with fast and strict solutions. Active listening is a golden rule for this class in order to allow every student to express their opinions and share and benefit from their peers' point of view.

Methods of Instruction

The course covers a wide range of issues and contains both a theoretical and a practical dimension. All the readings bear some relevance to the social, political, economic, religious, and/or cultural landscape of Senegal. We will try to break the habit of the passive classroom by encouraging students' participation and involvement in case studies as well as the use of active inquiry into problems they find in lectures and course materials. Students will be asked to conduct hands-on research on aspects of Senegalese society that they find to be pertinent to their academic interests. At the end of the semester students will learn to define their own reactions to the course materials and information derived from lectures while following their own curiosity about the meaning of the socio-cultural situations they engage in. Through close observation and analysis, students will thus refine their understanding of Senegalese society and culture.

Assessment and Final Grade

- Extent and quality of class participation **(20%)**
- A 3-4 page paper based on your rural visit – **(20%)**
- A 3-4 page essay on guest lecturers' topics and bringing them into dialogue with related readings – **(20%)**
- Group presentations on Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter **(20%)**
- An 8 page reflection paper on one aspect of your experience in Senegal – **(20%)**

NB: The papers should be typed (double-spaced) and submitted on the due dates.

Course Requirements

The course grade will be based on the following components:

- Extent and quality of class participation (lead discussion, raise questions and issues related to readings, asked questions of guest lecturers) – **(20%)**
- A 3-4 page paper based on your **RURAL VISIT**. This paper should not be a mere description of your experience. It could be a critical response to a conversation you had, a situation that challenged your personal or cultural values, etc. **(20%). Week 5**
- A 3-4 page essay reflecting on / responding to a guest lecture and bringing it into dialogue with related readings - **(20%). Week 8**
- Class presentations on Mariama Ba's **So Long a Letter**. **(20%). In Weeks 11 & 12**
- An 8 page reflection paper on one aspect of your experience in Senegal. This could be on a dimension of Senegalese society, culture, or political economy, or on a conversation with someone that affected you. This reflection will be presented orally one week before the end of the program **(20%). Due Date: Week 14**

NB: Papers should be typed (double-space) and submitted on the due dates.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: COURSE OVERVIEW AND FIRST OUTLINES

- A. Introduction
- B. course overview
- C. Student Personal Take (SPT) & Definitions of culture and society
- D. The Symbols of the Nation

Reading:

- Exploring Africa. The History of Senegal / <http://exploringAfrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m23/activity>
- <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Senegal-HISTORY.html>
<http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Senegal.html#ixzz3DFagTxSd>

Week 2: REFLECTIONS ON SENEGALESE IDENTITY

- A. History of Senegal
- B. Senegal: From independence to present / Screening of film on Mamadou Dia
- C. The Senegalese way: Téranga / Soutoura

Reading :

- Villalón, Leonardo A. **African Studies Review** 47.2 (Sep 2004): 61-71

Week 3:

- A. Religion & Society
- B. Cultural Values
- C. Social Orders : The Senegalese Caste System
- D. Screening of Sembène Ousmane's movie "**Xala**" (Spell Casting)

Reading

- "Guardians of Culture: The Controversial Heritage of Senegalese Griots", Hearn, Adrian H. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 15.2 (2004): 129-142.
- "Religion in Senegal"

Week 4: RURAL VISITS

Week 5 GENDER, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS



A. Panel discussion on Gender, Health and Human rights

Guest Speakers: Prudence Association with Djamil, Jean Marie & Friends

B. Debriefing

PAPER ON RURAL VISITS

Readings:

"The origins of Senegalese Homophobia: Discourses on Homosexuals and Transgender People in Colonial and Postcolonial Senegal", M'Baye, Babacar. **African Studies Review** 56.2 (Sep 2013): 109-128

"Circumcision" or "Mutilation"? Voluntary or Forced Excision? Extricating the Ethical and Legal Issues in Female Genital Ritual, Nnamuchi, Obiajulu. *Journal of Law and Health* (online) 25.1 (2012): 85-121.

Weeks 6-7 -8: A CHANGING SOCIETY

- The evolution of Senegalese Cuisine
- Senegalese fashion: between drift and alienation
- Loss of cultural values and social traditions: the example of skin

Lightening (Xessal).

Screening & commentary of the documentary "Cette Couleur qui Dérange"

Guest Speaker: Khardiata Pouye

- Prostitution and its economic underlinings: **Guest speakers: Sokhna and Mama (Sex Workers)**

Reading: Kew Claire's review of Bile's "Blanchissez-moi tous ces Negres!" Pascal Galode Editeurs, 2010

ESSAY ON GUEST SPEAKERS' TOPICS & RELATED READINGS

Week 9: ILLEGAL MIGRATION: "BARÇA OR BARSAQ"

- Reflections on Migration "Barça or Barsaq"
- Film: La Pirogue

Week 10 SPRING BREAK

Weeks 11 & 12: CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: SO LONG A LETTER, Mariama Ba

- Presentation of the novel and assigning of class presentation groups
- Girls' Education / Polygamy
- Class presentations
- So Long a Letter : Students' group presentations

Reading:

Birth of a Nation: The Origins of Senegalese Literature in French
Mariama Ba, So Long A Letter

FIELD TRIP: Crafts & Culture: The craftsmen's village in Thiès,

Week 13 POLITICS & SOCIETY

- Cheikh Anta Diop's Portrait
- Film: Kemtu
- Debriefing

Week 14:

- Hip Hop movement and social change: Screening and commentary of the *Fed up* documentary. Guests: Y en a Marre social movement
- Debriefing

Week 15:

- ❖ Class presentations
- ❖ Class presentations
- ❖

Week 16

Final paper

NB: Try not to interrupt (or talk to someone else) while another person is speaking. This means that when a student is talking, Everybody else will be listening.

NB: Please note that it is a CIEE policy that students attend classes throughout the semester. Students with excused absences (for illness or family emergency, for example) must complete make-up assignments.

Readings:

REQUIRED TEXTS & FILMS

TEXTS

- Ba, Mariama, So *Long a Letter*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.
- Fall, Aminata Sow, *The Beggars' Strike*. Dakar : NEAS, 2003
- Kane, Cheikh Hamidou, *Ambiguous Adventure*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1972.

FILMS

- *President Mamadou Dia*
- *Sembene Ousmane, Xala*
- *Fed Up* (un documentaire sur l'histoire politique du Sénégal).
- Sembène, Ousmane. *Moolaadé* (124mins), 2004.
- *La Pirogue*, 2006.
- *Kemtu*

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

BARRY BOUBACAR 1988, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

John S. Mbiti 1969, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Praeger, New York & Washington,

ROBINSON DAVID 2000, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and Colonial French Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio.

Boilat, David, *Senegalese Outlines*

Kemedjio, Cilas. "The Western Anti-colonialist of the Postcolonial Age: The Reformist Syndrome and the Memory of Decolonization in (Post-) Imperial French Thought."

Remembering Africa. Ed. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi. Portsmouth, NH: heinemann, 2002. 32-55.

Klein, Martin. *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*. Cambridge: Cup, 1998.

"THESE WALLS BELONG TO EVERYBODY" THE GRAFFITI ART MOVEMENT IN DAKAR

« Economic Mechanisms in Historical perspective ». Rabine, Leslie W. *African Studies Quarterly* 14.3 (Mar 2014): 89-112. Boye, François. In 'Le Sénégal Contemporain', 28-84, edited by *Momar Coumba Diop*, Karthala, 2002.