

HI31N: Conflict and Memory in Post-Colonial Africa

Handbook, 2013-14

Dr Daniel Branch (d.p.branch@warwick.ac.uk)

Office: H0.12, Humanities Building (Office hours Monday 2-3pm and Wednesday 11am-12pm)

Please note that this handbook is a summary of a far greater amount of material available on the module website

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/undergraduate/modules/hi31n/seminars/>

Class times

Seminar group 1: Monday 3-5pm in H3.46

Seminar group 2: Wednesday 9-11am in H3.03

Allocation of students to each seminar group has been emailed to all and can be found on the module webpage.

Summary

This module will examine the causes and effects of conflict upon African states and societies in the period since independence. Using a multidisciplinary approach, drawing in literature from international relations, political science, economics, anthropology and development studies, it will examine a series of case studies in order to demonstrate that what is often presented as irrational barbarity is an explainable historical phenomenon. The module will also stress the profound transformative effect of violence upon class, gender and ethnicity.

Case studies are drawn from across the continent and from throughout the postcolonial period. The focus of the module is as much upon the local level and everyday lives of “ordinary” people as it is upon states, the international community or global economy.

Aims

- To examine the causes and effects of civil wars and other forms of political violence upon African states and societies in the period since independence.
- To use a multidisciplinary approach – including literature from international relations, political science, economics, anthropology and development studies – to explore how what is often depicted as irrational barbarity is better understood as an explainable historical phenomenon.
- To explore the transformative effect of violence as an agent of historical change within post-colonial African societies.
- To discuss the ways in which memorialisation of violence has informed political processes and social relations in the aftermath of conflict in the cases discussed.
- To allow students to deploy skills acquired through their study of history to date in the study of complex and, in some cases, ongoing situations in order to form methodologically-rigorous and historically-grounded explanations of the contemporary world.
- To familiarise students with a diverse range of primary source material – including sources produced by aid agencies, international organisations, state governments, journalism and oral testimony – used by historians of post-colonial Africa.

Assessed & non-assessed essays

Every student must complete two non-assessed 2000 word essays. These are due on:

- Monday 11 November (week 7, term 1).
- Monday 6 January (week 1, term 2)

An optional mock exam can also be completed. The exam paper will be distributed on 10 February for submission on 17 February (week 7, term 2).

Assessment is by a two hour exam and 1 x 4500 word essay due in the summer term UNLESS a dissertation is attached to the module, in which case the assessment is 1 x 3 hour exam.

Students can create their own essay titles, but here are some suggestions:

- a. What has the connection been between identity and conflict in post-colonial Africa?
- b. To what extent can we understand wars fought before 1989 as 'old wars'?
- c. Assess the lasting effects of wars of independence.
- d. How have wars been memorialised in post-colonial Africa?
- e. Assess the importance of race to conflict in post-colonial Sudan.
- f. Why did Renamo target civilians in the Mozambican civil war?
- g. How important are clans to the conflict in Somalia?
- h. To what extent was the violence in Rwanda in 1994 a product of civil war?
- i. Why did the peace deal in Angola collapse in 1992 and civil war resume?
- j. Can the violence of the Sierra Leone civil war be described as rational?
- k. In light of events after his death, was Mobutu right to claim 'Après moi, le deluge'?
- l. Should the ongoing violence in Darfur be understood as genocidal?
- m. To what extent have histories of conflict in Rwanda been connected to those across its borders?
- n. Should the Holy Spirit Movement and Lord's Resistance Army be understood as religious groups?
- o. To what extent was Charles Taylor responsible for the civil war in Sierra Leone?

Reading

Required reading for each seminar is listed on the website. I highly recommend William Reno's *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge, 2011). However, it will not be used as a textbook and so is not compulsory. Students requiring more on the wider context of the events we'll be discussing in the module should look at Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002) and Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence: A Comparative History* (Basingstoke, 2004).

An extensive reading list is provided on the module website.

Seminar timetable

Readings and questions for discussion for each week are listed on the module website

	WEEK	SEMINAR
AUTUMN TERM	1	Explaining Violence
	2	The State and Violence in Post-Colonial Africa
	3	Comparisons I: The Violence of Decolonisation
	4	Comparisons II: The Challenges of Nationhood
	5	Comparisons III: Africa's Cold War
	6	~ reading week ~
	7	Comparisons IV: Violence and the New World Order
	8	Comparisons V: Violence in Contemporary Africa
	9	Debates I: Sudan and the Nation-Building Project
	10	Debates II: Congo and the Cold War
SPRING TERM	11	Debates III: Mozambique, Renamo and the Role of South Africa
	12	Debates IV: Uganda and the Role of Religion
	13	Debates V: Somalia and State Failure
	14	Debates VI: Sierra Leone and Intervention
	15	Debates VII: Rwanda and Truth and Justice
	16	~ reading week ~
	17	Debates VIII: DRC and New Wars
	18	Debates IX: Darfur and the Politics of Naming
	19	Debates X: Kenya and Democracy
	20	Conference