

History 197/AAS 104
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2:30 p.m.

Mason Hall 3451

Making News in Africa

Dr. Derek Peterson

1634 Haven Hall

email: drpeters@umich.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:45-4:00 pm and by appointment

This seminar is about the history and politics of newspaper journalism in Africa. Print technology arrived in Africa in the late 19th century, and the first newspapers were published in missionary presses. But African intellectuals quite quickly recognized print technologies as a useful means of addressing a people. Our interest will be in the relationship between audiences and editors, in how newsmen hailed, organized, and addressed their readers. In the 1930s and 40s African nationalists used newspapers to define and defend the cultural norms that drew them together as a people. In the 1950s urban populists found in newspapers a vehicle by which to mobilize campaigns. In the 1960s and 70s, after independence, African governments sought to close down avenues of free speech. But newspapermen kept publishing, and in the 1990s newspapers were the forums where a new generation of democratic politics could be conceived.

Each week we will focus on a different newspaper. We'll discuss the newspaper that Mahatma Gandhi published in South Africa during the 1920s. We'll talk about the 'Voice of Uganda', which was an instrument for Idi Amin's dictatorship. We'll study the politics of *Drum*, a news magazine that made African cities look posh, modern and romantic. Nowhere was the 'news' simply available, ready to be reported. African editors made choices about what was newsworthy, and by their news-making work they encouraged their readers to see themselves as sharers of particular experiences. Our interest here is in how newsmen used print to create news, address publics, organize people, and open up paths of political action. At the end of the semester students will prepare a research paper about the biography of an African newspaper.

Required Books (available at the bookstore)

Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press: Experiments with Slow Reading* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Most of the required readings are posted to the course's Canvas site, to which you should all have been given access (log in at www.canvas.umich.edu). The readings available on Canvas are marked with a ** below.

Course requirements:

1. Attendance and participation: This class meets twice a week. Attendance is mandatory; if you must miss a class, do let me know in advance. *Everyone should bring a copy of the week's*

readings to class on the day that they are to be discussed. The week's readings are generally to be prepared for our Tuesday meetings, which are labeled 'Discussion of reading' on the schedule below. You are welcome to bring an e-reader to class, or you may prefer to print the readings out.

2. Lead discussion. During two of the nine sessions during which we discuss a set of readings, you will (with a partner or two) lead the class. You should, together, prepare a joint set of reading questions on paper that will structure our conversation. These questions should be sent to me on email (drpeters@umich.edu) by 9:00 am on the day you are to lead class. During the class meeting you'll raise issues, point toward areas of controversy, and challenge your classmates to think more clearly.

3. Response papers. For both of the sessions during which you're leading discussion you should (individually) prepare a 3-4 page paper that analyses the assigned texts, focusing especially on the newspaper that we're reading. These short papers are due at the start of the class.

4. Research paper. In dialogue with me, you'll prepare a research paper of 18 to 20 pages in length concerning an aspect of the history of African newspapers. The key dates are as follows:

Thursday, 15 October: Meet with instructor to discuss questions and sources.

Due: 500 word proposal.

Thursday, 12 November: Meet with instructor.

Due: Bibliography, revised 500 word proposal and draft outline.

Tuesday, 8 December and Thursday, 10 December: Presentations of research in class.

Due: Abstract of your paper for circulation to classmates.

Tuesday, 8 December. **Due:** First draft of paper

Wednesday, 16 December at 4:00. **Due:** Final paper

Research papers will focus on a specific African newspaper. The aim is to show how 'your' publication worked, politically and socially. Who were the editors? In what controversies did they intervene? How did they use their newspaper to construct a particular reading of events? What audiences did they address, and of what did they seek to convince them? How did the reporting of news make particular lines of action thinkable?

Marking scheme

Marks will be determined as follows:

Attendance and participation (inc. discussion leading):	20 points
Research paper:	40 points
Response papers (x2):	15 points each
Presentation:	10 points

Academic Integrity Policy

This course follows the academic integrity guidelines set forth by the College of LSA [<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/>] and the History Department [<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/history/undergraduate/courses/guidelinesandpolicies>]. Students should familiarize themselves with both of these documents, which explain the standards of academic integrity and clarify the prohibited forms of academic misconduct. Students in this course should utilize the Chicago Manual of Style Online for all issues of source citation, along with any specific guidelines provided in the course assignments. Clarifying the disciplinary standards of research ethics and source citation is part of the educational mission of this course, and students should consult the instructor regarding any questions. Any cases of academic misconduct in this class will automatically earn a zero for the assignment (and may incur further penalties). All cases of deliberate academic misconduct that result in formal sanctions of any kind will be reported to the dean's office, as required by LSA policy, which also ensures due process rights of appeal for students.

Grading criteria:

Grading papers is not an exact business. I will not give or take off a fixed number of points for particular strengths or weaknesses. The following table, therefore, should be read as a guideline.

GRADE	ARGUMENT	EVDIENCE	STYLE	MECHANICS
A	Argument clearly stated at beginning and developed logically throughout the paper to a clear conclusion.	Extensive and varied evidence supports argument. No significant omissions, irrelevancies, or errors.	Excellent prose style; clear, elegant and persuasive.	No errors of grammar, spelling etc.
B	Argument generally clear, but some digressions or failures to develop fully to a conclusion.	Generally good evidence, but some lack of variety of sources or errors of omission, or some irrelevant data.	Clear and understandable prose, but less than elegant.	A few minor errors.
C	Argument is implied, but not explicitly states and/or not well developed to a conclusion.	Some evidence, but excessive dependence on a single source, substantial omissions or irrelevancies, and/or minor errors of fact.	Understandable writing, but sometimes vague, wooden, or choppy.	Substantial errors which detract from overall effect of the paper.
D	Argument is barely discernable and/or very poorly developed.	Very little or largely irrelevant evidence, and/or substantial errors of fact.	Writing is confusing, vague, and/or hard to understand.	Frequent and serious errors which make paper hard to understand.
F	No discernable argument or paper totally digresses from argument.	Virtually no relevant evidence and/or very serious errors of fact.	Writing is nearly unintelligible.	Massive errors which render paper nearly unintelligible.

*** Schedule ***

Tues., 8 Sept.

Introduction to the class

I. The West African Press and the Politics of Liberalism

Reading:

Stephanie Newell, 'Trickster Tactics and the Question of Authorship in Newspaper Folktales', in *The Power to Name* (Heinemann, 2013), 101-121. **

Newell, 'Appendix: Wallace-Johnson in Court', in *The Power to Name* (Heinemann, 2013), 183-191. **

Newell, 'From Corpse to Corpus: the Printing of Death in Colonial West Africa', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell, eds., *African Print Cultures* (forthcoming). **

A Banker, 'The Abyss of the Infinite', 'A Shrouded World', 'Britannia Rules the Waves' and 'A Venerable Stronghold', in *The Gold Coast Leader*, 1901-1904. **

Thurs., 10 Sept.

Lecture: Newspapers, the 'public sphere', and political life in West Africa

Tues., 15 Sept.

Discussion of readings

II. Newspapers and Literary Experiments

Reading:

I.B. Thomas, 'The Life Story of Me, "Segilola of the Fascinating Eyes," She Who Had a Thousand Lovers in Her Life' (1929-30), in K. Barber, ed., *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel* (Brill, 2012). **

Karin Barber, 'Writing, Genre, and a Schoolmaster's Inventions in the Yoruba Provinces', in K. Barber, ed., *Africa's Hidden Histories* (Indiana, 2006), 385-415. **

Thurs., 17 Sept.

Lecture: Newspapers and the generation of literature

Tues., 22 Sept.

Discussion of readings: Who did Yoruba writers write for?

III. Christianity and Public Culture

Reading:

Excerpts from *Mwigwithania* ('The Reconciler') (1929-30). **

J. Lonsdale, "'Listen while I read": patriotic Christianity among the Gikuyu', in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change* (Carolina, 2005). **

Thurs., 24 Sept.

Lecture: Christianity and literacy

Tues., 29 Sept.

Discussion of readings: The making of a vernacular literature

IV. Vernacular Newspapers in South Africa

Reading:

R. Hunt Davis, 'John L. Dube, Pioneer Editor of *Ilanga lase Natal*', in L. Switzer, ed., *South Africa's Alternative Press* (Cambridge, 1997), 83-98. **

Excerpts from *Ilanga lase Natal* vol. 22 (1925) and vol. 27 (1931). **

Thurs., 1 Oct.

Lecture: South Africa's newspaper industry

Tues., 6 Oct.

Discussion of reading: John Dube and the politics of *Ilanga lase Natal*

V. Gandhi in South Africa

Reading:

I. Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press: Experiments with Slow Reading* (Harvard, 2013).

Thurs., 8 Oct.

Lecture: Newspaper publishing in the Indian Ocean world

Tues., 13 Oct.

Discussion of reading: Gandhi's experiments

Thurs., 15 Oct.

Individual meetings with instructor to discuss final paper

Due: 500 word proposal for final research paper

Tues., 20 Oct.

Fall Break

VI. New Media: The *West African Pilot*

Reading:

Leslie James, 'Trans-Atlantic Passages: Black Identity Construction in West African and West Indian Newspapers, 1935-1950', in Peterson, Hunter and Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures* (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming). **

David Pratten, 'Creole Pioneers in the West African Provincial Press', in Peterson, Hunter and Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures* (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming). **

Excerpts from the *West African Pilot* vol. 1 (1937) and vol. 5 (1942). **

Thurs., 22 Oct.

Lecture: New media in Nigeria's political history

Tues., 27 Oct.

Discussion of reading

VII. Journalism in Central Kenya

Reading:

Bodil Frederiksen, "'The Present Battle is the Brain Battle": Writing and Publishing a Kikuyu Newspaper in the Pre-Mau Mau Period in Kenya', in K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories* (Indiana University Press, 2006), 278-313. **

Henry Muoria, 'What Shall we Do, Our People?', 'The Coming Home of our Great Hero, Jomo Kenyatta', and 'Kenyatta is our Reconciler', in Henry Muoria, *Writing for Kenya*, ed. J. Lonsdale, Wangari Muoria-Sal, B. Frederiksen and D. Peterson (Brill, 2003), 136-379. **

Thurs., 29 Oct.

Lecture: Henry Muoria's Life and Times

Tues., 3 Nov.

Discussion of reading: Publishing *Mumenyereri*

VIII. Drum Magazine and the Journalism of Urban South Africa

Reading:

Kenda Mutongi, 'Dear Dolly's Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship, and Sexualities in Africa, 1960-1980', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33 (1) (2000), 1-23. **

Excerpts from *Drum* vol. 3 (March 1954) and vol. 4 (Dec. 1955). **

Thurs., 5 Nov.

Lecture: *Drum* in Africa's history of media

Tues., 10 Nov.

Screening: 'Have you Seen *Drum* Lately?' (1989)

Thurs., 12 Nov.

Individual meetings with instructor to discuss final paper

Due: Bibliography and revised proposal for final research paper

Tues., 17 Nov.

Discussion of reading: *Drum's* aesthetics

Thurs., 19 Nov.

No class: Instructor at African Studies Association meeting in San Diego

IX. Media Economies in Idi Amin's Uganda

Reading:

Derek Peterson and Edgar Taylor, 'The Politics of Exhortation in Idi Amin's Uganda', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7 (2013), 58-82. **

Excerpts from *Voice of Uganda* vol. 1 (1972) and vol. 3 (1974). **

Tues., 24 Nov.

Lecture: The Rhetoric and Practice of Government in Amin's Uganda

Screening: 'General Idi Amin Dada' (1974)

Thurs., 26 Nov.

Thanksgiving break

Tues., 1 Dec.

Discussion of reading: Media in Idi Amin's Uganda

Thurs., 3 Dec.

Work in final presentations

Tues., 8 Dec.

Presentations of research projects

Due: First draft of research paper

Due: Abstract of research paper for circulation to the class

Thurs., 10 Dec.

Presentations of research projects

**Final essays are due on the day of the final exam
Wednesday, 16 December at 4:00 p.m.**