**LMC 6368: Global Cinema: West Africa**

Prof. Angela Dalle Vacche

**Course Description**

African cinema has been understood and recognized around the world most often for its powerful themes and ingeniously narrated stories. From Sembene's La Noire de ........... to Sissako's Bamako, critics and audiences in Africa and everywhere have been confronted , physically and intellectually, with the brutal presence , effects, and pain of colonialism and post-colonialism. In Wend Kuuni, Yelen, Hyenes, Touki Bouki, Yaaba, Abouna, and so many other masterpieces, those same critics , that same global audience, has been led deftly and ingeniously by master story-tellers into the inner and outer landscapes and cityscapes where African ideals, concerns, traditions, values are put into play, tested, celebrated and enjoyed. For 45 years the singular rhetoric and narrative artistry of African documentaries, animations and fictions have been unmistakable. But what of this cinema's visual textures, forms, and meanings? Critics often speak of --and spectators have been struck by--astounding images, film after film. But seldom has the complexity, the heritage, and logic of visual design of African films been fully taken into account and interpreted. In this class we shall concentrate on the relations among oral story-telling, musical rhythms, textile patterns and film-editing techniques; we shall also examine the importance of youth, vitality and children in films with non-professional actors; we shall address the use of camera movement in regard to the opposition between the village and the city and in the context of open landscapes. The syllabus will include light-hearted African comedies set in diasporic European communities as well as more serious feature films which interrogate colonial history, immigration, family relations, human behavior, moral codes, and the circulation of images between Europe and Africa. This course will build on the undergraduate version of Global Cinema by allowing students to develop their research skills through a more sustained, comparative lens of inquiry, and the opportunity to create new media artifacts.

**Learning Outcomes**

• Textual/Visual/Media Analysis: Ability to analyze, critique, and compare media across cultures, formats, and modes to communicate complex issues in culture, media, and technology to a variety of constituents.

• Historical and Cultural Frameworks: Developing an understanding of historical and cultural contexts related to various regions, including the impact of colonialism and globalization on economic, political, and social development.

• Social Justice/Social Awareness: Ability to create environments that enhance dimensions of diversity, inclusion, social justice, and global competence.

• Collaboration and Interpretation: Learning to facilitate understanding and collaboration across cultures with other professionals who design, produce, and disseminate media products.

• Global Understanding/Interpretive Frameworks: Ability to work in a global context grounded upon a theoretically informed and comparative understanding of languages, media, cultures, and technologies.

**Required Books**

1) Robert Thompson, Flash of The Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and

Philosophy (Vintage, 1984)

2) Ernest Harsh, Thomas Sankara, An African Revolutionary (Ohio UP, 2014)

3) Frank Ukadike, Questioning African Cinema (U of Minnesota P, 2002)

**Essays on T-Square:**

1. Rachel Gabara, “A Poetics of Refusal: Neorealism from Italy to Africa,” Laura E. Ruberto and Kristi M. Wilson, Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema (Wayne State UP, 2007), 187-206.
2. Sada Niang, “Neorealism and Nationalist African Cinema,” Saverio Giovacchini and Robert Sklar eds. Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of A Film Style (UP of Mississippi, 2012), 194-208.
3. Lucia Nagid, “Yaaba,” in World Cinema and The Ethics of Neorealism(Continuum, 2011) 42-51*.*
4. Philip Rosen, “Toward a Radical Historicity,”Making A Nation in Sembene’s Ceddo,” in Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory (U of Minnesota Pr, 2001), 265-300.
5. Dudley Andrew, “The Roots of The Nomadic: Gilles Deleuze and The Cinema of West Africa,” in Gregory Flaxman ed. The Brain and The Screen: Gilles Deleuze and The Philosophy of Cinema (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000), 215-245.

**Assignments:**

Written work includes one short paper (around 5-6 pages) and one long paper (around 10-15 pages). In addition, you will participate in one (group) oral presentation. All assignments must be completed to attain a passing grade.

**Grading:**

Exam 1,2,3: 50%

Oral Report: 25%

30 minutes on filmmaker plus assigned film via lottery 25%

Final Paper or Project 25%

Based on Oral Report

The grading scale for students will be:

* A: 90-100. This student demonstrates a thorough understanding and skilled use of class concepts and terminology. Moreover, s/he uses class concepts and terminology in such a way that s/he teaches us something new about the subject at hand.
* B: 80-89. This student demonstrates a solid understanding of and ability to use class concepts and terminology. However, s/he may demonstrate the need to learn more about some aspect of the subject at hand or may need to continue practicing pulling together key concepts and ideas.
* C. 70-79. This student generally grasps the key concepts and terminology of this class, but cannot yet use them consistently to provide in-depth analysis of class materials.
* D: 60-69. This student fails to understand or use class concepts and terminology much if at all in class or projects. S/he may also fail to provide accurate or in-depth analyses of the topic at hand or texts associated with it.
* F: 0-59. This student demonstrates a complete lack of understanding about the subject at hand. S/he may also fail to complete major assignments in an appropriate and/or timely manner.

*Absence from more than three classes will result in the loss of 1-letter grade for the course.*

*Tardiness for more than four classes will result in the loss of 1-letter grade for the course.*

## Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/ or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## Attendance Policy

## Students who are on campus while enrolled in 6368 are expected to attend all classes. Students will receive periodic updates on their attendance grade in Weeks 4, 8, and 12, either via email or on Canvas. Students who are overseas will attend electronically via skype and email. Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. See information at <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/class-attendance>.

**Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, you are encouraged to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

**Class Meetings and Screenings**: Except for the first two or three class meetings, some of the additional film titles mentioned below refer to clips I may use in class, time allowing. Hence attendance to class meetings is highly encouraged because my lectures are different from the readings.

**All films on 2-hour reserve in Library. Attendance to Wednesday Class Screenings is Highly Encouraged.**

Tuesday August 22: Introduction of Course: What is World Cinema? and What you need to know about African Cinema. Screening of Sembene! (2015) by Samba Gadjigo, 89 minutes

Wed. Aug. 23 **No Screening**

Thursday August 24: Why Cheik Anta Diop is important for African Film-makers?

Screening of Kemtiyu (documentary on Cheikh Anta Diop).

Tuesday August 29: Why is Burkina Faso important for African Cinema? Who is Thomas Sankara. Read Ernest Harsch, *Thomas Sankara, An African Revolutionary*.

Wed. Aug. 30 **No Screening**

Thursday August 31: Haile Gerima, Adwa (1999). Read: Ukadike, Interview with Gerima, pp. 253-280 **Read: Rachel Gabara T-Square**

Tuesday September 5: **EXAM 1**. What did you learn so far? Essay Questions.

**Screening:** Wed. Sept. 6 Mahamet Saleh Haroun, Abouna, 2002 Chad

Thursday September 7: Verification of Students’ Participation Deadline.

Voices against Colonialism in the West: Gillo Pontecorvo, The Battle of Algers (1966) and Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, The Statues Also Die (1956). **Read: Sada Niang T-Square**

Tuesday September 12: Read Ukadike’s Interview with Kabore`, pp. 109-120.

**Screening:** Wed. Sept. 13 Gaston Kabore`, Wend Kuuni, 1982 Burkina Faso

Thursday September 14: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. xiii-p. 33

Tuesday September 19: Read Ukadike’s Interview with Ouedraogo. Read **Nagib T-Square.**

**Screening:** Wed. Sept. 20 Idrissa Ouedraogo, Yaaba 1989 Burkina Faso

Thursday September 21: Read Ukadike’s Interview with Med Hondo. Read **Rosen T**-**Square**

Tuesday September 26: **Exam 2:** In class**,** write a critical overview of all the films 1) you have seen so far in this class. Integrate in your discussion, the lectures and the readings.

**Screening:** Wed. Sept. 27 Med Hondo, Sarrounia 1986 Burkina Faso

Thursday September 28: Progress Report Deadline. Read Thompson, Flash of The Spirit,pp. 33-60.

Tuesday October 3 Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 60-90.

**Screening:** Wed. Oct. 4 Dani Kouyate, Sia, The Dream of the Python, 2001 Burkina Faso

Thursday October 5: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 90-108.

**October Break: No Screening on Wednesday October 11, No Class Meeting on Thursday October 12: Professor guest-lecturing out of town.**

Tuesday October 17: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 108-125.

**Screening:** Wed. Oct. 18 Djibril Diop Mambeti, Touki-Bouki 1973 Senegal

Thursday October 19: Thompson, Flask of The Spirit, pp. 125-140

Tuesday October 24: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 140-160

**Screening:** Wed. Oct. 25 Dani Kouyate, Keita, The Heritage of the Griot, 1995,

Thursday October 26: **Withdrawal Deadline Coming Up.** Thompson,Flash of TheSpirit, pp. 160-180

Tuesday October 31: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 180-200

**Screening:** Wed. Nov 1, Souleymane Cisse, Yeleen, 1987, Mali

Thursday November 2: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 200-220

Tuesday November 7: Thompson, Flash of The pp. 220-240

**Screening:** Wed. Nov 8, Mahamet Saleh Haroun, Darratt, 2006, Chad

Thursday November 9: Thompson, Flash of The Spirit, pp. 240-266

Tuesday November 14: Oral Reports

**Screening:** Wed. Nov. 15 Abderrahmane Sissako, Life on Earth, 2000, Mauritania

Thursday November 16: **Exam3.** Summary of everything you have learnt since October Break on African, art, religion, anthropology thanks to Thompson, Flash of The Spirit

**Thanksgiving Break**

Tuesday November 28 Oral Reports

**Screening:** Wed. Nov. 29 Abdherradame Sissako, Bamako (2008), Mali

Thursday November 30 Oral Reports

**Tuesday December 5:** Last Day of Classes: General Discussion of the Class and Distribution of Students’ Evaluations.

**ALL FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE DURING THE ASSIGNED FINAL EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS COURSE. 10-15 pages double spaced with a two-page bibliography with single spaced entries and double-space between entries.**