CHINA AND AFRICA: GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS IN HISTORY AND PRESENT
Course syllabus

Peking University Summer School 2020
Course Title: China and Africa: Global Encounters in History and Present
Course Instructors: Liang Xu (许亮) and Ying Cheng (程莹)
Level: Upper level undergraduate/graduate students
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Course Description:

The twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented growth of economic cooperation between African countries and China. Achille Mbembe, a prominent African political philosopher, once proclaims that Africa-China will become the most important “material relations” in global capitalism. Over the last two decades, China’s accelerating influence on the African continent has raised a host of questions. Is Africa China’s second continent? How do African states and African people respond to opportunities and challenges posed by China’s presence? Is China a development model for Africa? Are Chinese people racist? How much soft power does China have in Africa? How do China and Africa portray each other in arts and literature?

To address these questions, our course focuses on both the material and nonmaterial dimensions of this fast-developing relationship. On the one hand, we will challenge the often-skewed treatment of China in Africa as a unitary presence by looking closely at three different levels of engagement: the state and the state-owned enterprises, medium and small sized private companies, and the grassroots adventurerists and migrants. On the other hand, we will examine China-Africa relations through the lenses of popular media, moving images, contemporary arts, and literary texts. It is our firm belief that the representation and construction of identity and otherness is an essential component of everyday life that fundamentally shapes our experience, perception, and even prejudice in cross-cultural communications and encounters. In this course we will explore:

• The history and the present state of China-Africa relations,
• key myths and rumours about China’s involvement in Africa,
• preliminary development impacts of China’s presence on the continent,
• the role of migration and migrants in China-Africa engagement,
• and the relevance of media, film, arts, and literature in contemporary China-Africa relations.

By thinking critically about China-Africa engagement, we hope that our students each will become a better observer of our shared and increasingly globalized world. It is our contention that China-Africa is by no means an Afroasian story only; more profoundly, it is a story of global encounters. Though we use academic, journalistic, and various visual evidence to study China-Africa as a substantive field, we encourage and help students to interrogate and gain deeper understanding of key themes such as state and development, race and gender, culture and capitalism, and diaspora and globalization. Ultimately, we
believe that students will apply such concepts not only to the study of other subjects but also to their lives beyond school.

**Course Requirements:**

The class will meet five days a week, either in class or on field trips. Student participants are expected to have read some of the assigned readings before coming to class and engage in class discussions. In addition to readings suggested in the syllabus, students are encouraged to find additional outside readings and resources. All students will be expected to write two field trip essays during the program. There will be a final exam on the last day of the course.

- Final Exam: 30%
- Field Trip Essays: 40% (two essays, 20% each)
- Class Participation: 30%
Session 1 Study China-Africa: Why and How?

Required reading:

Further reading:
https://thenewinquiry.com/blog/visiting-africa-a-short-guide-for-researchers/
Binyavanga Wainaina. “How to Write about Africa.”
https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/

Session 2 Place China-Africa in Context: Does History Matter?

Required reading:

Further reading:

Session 3 Agricultural Cooperation:

From Dazhai to New Paradigms in International Development
Required reading:
Read “Long March” and “The Mountains Are High and the Emperor is Far Away.”

Further reading:

Session 4 China-Africa Industrial Cooperation: Bulldozer or Locomotive?
Required reading:

Further reading:
Irene Sun et al. (2017), Dance of the Lions and Dragons, McKinsey report.
Liang Xu, “Factory, Family, and Industrial Frontier” (forthcoming)

Session 5 Barefoot Doctors, Medical Teams, and the Future of China-Africa Cooperation in Public Health
Required reading:

Further reading:
邱泽奇: 《朋友在先：中国对乌干达卫生发展援助案例研究》，北京：社会科学出版社。
Read Chapter 6.
Session 6 “How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?”
The Voice of China in Africa and China-Africa Media Interactions

Required reading:

For further reading:

Session 7 Field Trip I: China-Africa Media Interactions
Visit Startimes Beijing Head Office

Session 8 A Silent Invasion?
From Coolie Trade to New Waves of Chinese Migration in Africa

Required reading:

Further reading:


Session 9 “Chocolate Cities”: Dreams and Realities of Africans in China

Required reading:


Further reading:


Session 10 From “Kongfu Film” to “Nollywood” and “Quaishou Video”:

Understanding Otherness through Popular Moving Images
Required reading:


Film Screening: Nollywood Film (2016) *Receive Your China Visa*.

Further reading:

Roberto Castillo. “Of ‘blackfaces’ and SinoAfrican modernities”
https://africansinchina.net/2018/03/07/opinion-blackface-and-sinoafrican-modernities/


Wu Jing (2016), *Wolf Warriors* (《战狼》)（Excerpt）

Selected Quashou Video materials

**Session 11 Film Screening (Three Films)**

*Guangzhou Factory Dream* (60 minutes)

*China Remix* (29 minutes)

*Chinese in South Africa* (select clips)

**Session 12 “The Agency of Arts”: Interrogating “Chinafrica” (“中非”) in Contemporary African Arts**

Required reading:


Further reading:

Olu Oguibe. 2015. “Samuel Fosso: Emperor of Africa”
https://aperture.org/blog/samuel-fosso-emperor-africa/

Mary Pettas (2016), “A ‘Natural’ Alliance Between Kenyan And Chinese Artists Flourishes In Venice”

Session 13 Writing Against/ Beyond “Imperial Rhetoric”?
Tracing Africa-China in Literary Representations and Movements

Required reading:
NoViolet Bulawayo (2013). *We Need New Names*. Selected Pages.
Film Screening: Africa's Asian Options (AFRASO) *Afrasian Memories in East Africa* (Excerpt)

Further reading:

Session 14 Field Trip II: “Being an African in Beijing”
Guided Tour in Beijing
Useful sites about Black Community in China.
https://africansinchina.net/
https://blacklivesinchina.wordpress.com/
http://blacklivitychina.com/

Session 15 Are Chinese Racist? Rethinking Race, Gender, and Culture

Required reading:

Further reading:


**Session 16 An Open Conclusion: Third World, Global South, and Beyond**

**Required reading:**


**Further reading:**


*Final Exam (90 minutes)*