

HIST 565: Race, Colonialism, and Resistance:
The Case of South Africa

Dr. Benedict Carton, Associate Professor, Department of History, Africa Coordinator,
African and African American Studies Program, Wed. 7:20-10:00 PM, Innovation 207

An electronic copy of this syllabus can be obtained from <http://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We are fortunate to have a large pool of scholarship from which to draw monographs that explore a range of historical themes: Dutch-Khoekhoe relations in the Cape and imperial/colonial constructions of race; influences of Christianity; twilight of slavery; natural disaster and millenarian prophecy; imperial politics and the limits of 'empire-building' in African and settler societies; labor migrancy, rural-urban cultures, and changing gender identities; competing modern nationalisms; the rise of liberation movements; and the stigma of disease. Throughout the semester, we focus on the ways in which different people defined "separateness" and "belonging." Our major aim is to understand the complex interplay between conquest, resistance, and accommodation.

Historians of South Africa employ a range of analytical frameworks to interpret the past. Some scholars highlight gender relations; others focus on racial and class dynamics; still others trace the emergence of powerful ethnic (rather than "tribal") nationalisms. As AIDS extends its devastating reach, the latest research considers how environmental crisis and rampant epidemic profoundly affected community well-being. A central goal of this seminar is for you to engage in scholarly debates and develop your own perspectives of South African history.

READINGS

The readings include works of historical analysis and synthesis. Several required journal articles and book chapters will be sent to your gmu.edu account. For the list of readings (required and optional), please see "semester schedule" on page 3 of this syllabus.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- 1. Please do NOT arrive late to seminar.**
- 2. Please turn OFF cell phones and all hand-held communication devices in class.**
- 3. I am sorry to say that GMU regulations do not allow you to eat or drink in class.**
- 4. When emailing your professor, please include the heading "HIST 565."**
- 5. You are expected to check for occasional emails from your professor.**

COURSE REGISTRATION DEADLINES

February 4, 2009 is the last day for students to add a class to their schedules. Similarly, February 4, 2009 is the last day for students to drop classes and receive a 100% refund. The last day a student can drop this course without obtaining special permission is February 20, 2009.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class participation is worth **15%** of your overall grade. **You must finish the assigned weekly readings before coming to seminar.**

You are required to write **two 5-page book review essays**. The first review essay is worth **20%** of your overall grade; the second review essay is worth **25%** of your overall grade. You must complete a draft of each essay and email it (saved in MSWORD, 1997-2003 version) to bcarton1@gmu.edu no later than 2:00 PM on the Wednesday that it is due. Please give me the final (hard) copy of the essay in seminar. Your “draft” essays will inform our weekly discussions. In our second class of the semester, I will ask students to choose their books to review from sections I-IV. You should consider **some** (but **not all**) of the following essay guidelines:

A) In your opinion, what motivated the scholar(s) to write the book you are reviewing? B) What is the main argument of the book? C) Do the primary and/or secondary sources support the main argument? D) To what extent does the book break new ground and/or build on previous ideas? E) Are certain scholarly interpretations or methodological approaches singled out for criticism (here, you should explore how historians identify the intellectual “shortcomings and slights” of their field)? F) Are the criticisms fair? G) Does the book appear to ignore crucial perspectives that undermine its findings?

Finally, you are required to write a 15-page final paper; it is worth **40%** of your overall grade. In mid-April, you will be given the essay question(s) and format. The final paper must critically examine **at least 7 assigned books and 2 assigned articles**. **This final paper is due May 11, 2009.**

ALL PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED ½ A GRADE POINT FOR EACH DAY LATE. Please note that this grading penalty applies to every day late in a seven-day week.

GMU ACADEMIC POLICIES

George Mason’s academic policies and honor code apply to this course.

CONTACT INFORMATION

I will hold **office hours** on Monday, 4:30-5:30 P.M, and Wednesday, 4:00-5:15 P.M. If I change these times, I will inform you in advance. It is best to contact me, preferably by email, several days before you plan to attend my office hours so that you are guaranteed an appointment. Appointments can be made before or after seminar, and by email: bcarton1@gmu.edu. **You are required to contact me well before an assignment is due if you experience problems in meeting a deadline. My office is in Robinson B Room 355 B.**

Spring 2009 Semester Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 21: Seminar Introduction: What is at stake in contested histories of South Africa? We view part of the film “Seven-Up South Africa,” a 1992 documentary that features the poignant hopes of seven-year-old children on the eve of the first all-race national democratic election.

SECTION ONE: Cultural Contacts, Race Relations, and Missionary Impact

Week 2: Jan. 28: Staging Conquest: Vanishing and Changing Identities in Colony and Metropole—**Required book** to read for Wed. Jan 28th: Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*; **required article** (to be emailed): Leonard Guelke and Robert Shell, “Landscape of conquest: Frontier water conquest and Khoikhoi strategies of survival, 1652-1780,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* (1992). Please consider the following **optional reading** (to be emailed): Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, “The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck tercentenary festival,” *Journal of African History* (1993).

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 1-39.

Some questions to consider when reading *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*: How did Khoekhoe people lose their resources and autonomy? Were the Dutch more intrusive as a colonial power than the British (in the Cape)? Who managed to exercise the greatest control over Cape frontiers (i.e., settlers, slaves, Khoekhoe, Xhosa, etc.)? What were the primary sources of wide spread violence in the Cape?

Did European forces of imperial power and Western science ultimately define race in early-19th-century South Africa? How did Britons and other Europeans use the Hottentot Venus to reinforce racial hierarchies in the metropole (home) and periphery (colony)? Was Sara Baartman caught in trap of imperial/colonial paternalism/exploitation or did she actively participate in her own elevation as the Hottentot Venus? How did the Khoekhoe Venus enable British authorities to promote their “civilizing mission”? Did Sara Baartman’s presence on the podium and in the laboratory (i.e., Cuvier’s anatomy table) provide evidence of a new and modern racial Other?

What scholarly debates inform the authors’ main argument in *Sara Baartman*? Would you call this book a work of post-colonial and/or feminist analysis?

Week 3: Feb. 4: Slavery, Emancipation, and the Making of “Coloureds”—**Required book** to read for Wed. Feb. 4th: John Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*; **required book chapter**: Pumla Gqola, “‘Like three tongues on one mouth’: Tracing the elusive lives of slave women in (slavocratic) South Africa,” in Nomboniso Gasa ed. *Women in South African History: Basus’imbokodo, Bawel’imilambo / They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers* (this text is now accessible on google):

<http://books.google.com/books?id=YOHHNsojPIC&pg=PR5&dq=nomboniso+gasa+pumla+dineo+gqola>

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 46-53.

Some questions to consider when reading *Social Death and Resurrection*: How does Mason define “social death”? Does his handling of sources enhance the overall argument of his book? How did slaves maintain their own communities—in opposition to the values of their masters? Remember to consider the effects of master-slave violence in gender terms. Were slaves able to maintain marriages and create functional families? Did colonial paternalism save or degrade slaves; or save and degrade slaves? Were differences between slave, servant, worker, and master clearly defined in early-19th-century South Africa? When considering this last question, account for the regional varieties of slavery and servitude (rural v. urban)?

Week 4: Feb. 11: Languages of Faith and the Civilizing Mission:

Evangelical Currents from Great Britain to South Africa—**Required book** to read for Wed. Feb. 11th: Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853*; **required article** (to be emailed): Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, “Christianity and colonialism in South Africa,” *American Ethnologist* (1986). Please consider the following **optional reading** (to be emailed): Benedict Carton, “Faithful anthropologists: Christianity, ethnography and the making of ‘Zulu Religion’ in early colonial Natal,” in B. Carton, et al, eds. *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Columbia University Press, 2008).

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 54-69.

Some questions to consider when reading *Blood Ground*: Did British Protestant churches dictate the “field” gospel to their missionaries in 19th-century South Africa? Did the (metropolitan) tenets of the “civilizing mission” undergo a transformation in the Cape? Did the internal politics of mission organizations undermine the ability of proselytizers to enlarge their “flock”? Did settlers and missionaries generally share the same views about Africans? Were Cape authorities and Protestant missionaries unified in their desire to establish a British colonial presence in South Africa? How did African Christians and “heathens” influence the “long conversation” called conversion? Did the message of the gospel remain consistent in missions that welcomed African Christians? Why weren’t more Africans convinced by the Bible? Did it matter to missionaries that a significant number of their potential converts never embraced Christianity? What factors contributed most to a successful conversion?

SECTION TWO: Myths of Devastating Rule and Ruination

Week 5: Feb. 18: Shaka and Zulu Empire—**Required book** for Wed. Feb. 18th: Carolyn Hamilton: *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*; **required book chapter** (to be emailed): Mbongiseni Buthelezi, “The empire talks back: Re-examining the legacies of Shaka and Zulu power in post-apartheid South Africa,” in Carton, et al, *Zulu Identities*. Please consider the following **optional readings**: Jennifer Weir, “Chiefly women and women’s leadership in pre-colonial southern Africa,” in Gasa, *Women in South African History*; Benedict Carton and Malcolm Draper, “Bulls in the boardroom: The Zulu warrior ethic and the spirit of South African capitalism,” in Carton, et al, *Zulu Identities* (to be emailed).

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 75-81; 98-102; 105-109; 111-118.

Some questions to consider when reading *Terrific Majesty*: How do scholarly debates (re: Edward Said's *Orientalism*, for example) influence Hamilton's interpretation of Shaka? Would you call Hamilton a historian of myths or an anthropologist critical of written and oral narratives? Is the legend of Shaka, the murderous Black Napoleon and Zulu empire-builder, confirmed by Hamilton's critical assessment of sources? Was Shaka's reputation, in fact, "invented" and manipulated for a variety of purposes? Does Hamilton absolve Shaka of the cruelty long associated with the Zulu rise to power, i.e., his leading role in the "debunked" mfecane, the so-called mass dispersion of southern African peoples in the early nineteenth century?

Why were whites in colonial power eager to embrace elements of Shaka's authoritarianism? Why did prominent Natal settlers evoke Shaka as a model of leadership, if they claimed to reject Zulu "savagery"? Consider how the reputation of Shaka transformed over time, eliciting a range of emotions from fear to fun. How did Shaka make the posthumous transition from death-dealer to Great Man with a theme park named Shakaland?

Week 6: Feb. 25: Vision of Doom or Deliverance?—Required book: for Wed. Feb. 25th, J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7*; required book chapter: Helen Bradford, "Not a Nongqawuse story: An anti-heroine in historical perspective," in Gasa, *Women in South African History*. Please consider the following optional reading (to be emailed): Helen Bradford, "Women, gender and colonialism: Rethinking the history of the British Cape Colony and its frontier zones," *Journal of African History* (1996).

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 62-66; 93-94; 118-121.

Some questions to consider when reading *The Dead Will Arise*: What do you think motivated Peires to write this book? How could an adolescent girl (with little social power as a female junior) galvanize popular belief in divine deliverance? Did Xhosa patriarchs manipulate Nongqawuse? Do you think Nongqawuse suffered from delusions? Does Peires downplay the civil conflicts sparked by Nongqawuse's visions? Does the author "ventriloquise" or "invent" the voices of his historical actors? Critically compare his treatment of oral and written sources to Mason's methodological approach in *Social Death and Resurrection*. Would you classify Peires's study as "history from below"?

How did Christian influences determine the nature and scope of the cattle-killing? Consider how the story of the Resurrection did or did not reflect the spiritual outlook of Xhosa people. Was the cattle-killing prophecy anti-white or anti-colonial; anti-Christian or anti-missionary? Did the specter of witchcraft overshadow the cattle-killing movement? Were accusations of witchcraft practices at the time of the cattle-killing prophecy a traditional reaction to the collapse of Xhosa society? Was the Xhosa cattle-killing a national suicide or rational response to unrelenting crisis?

SECTION THREE: "White Man's" War and "Dis-ease" in the New Order

Week 7: Mar. 4: What was the "Boer War"?—Required book for Wed. Mar 4th: Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*; required book chapter: Elizabeth van Heyningen, "Women and Gender in the South African War, 1899-1902," in Gasa, *Women in South African History*. Please **strongly**

consider the following optional readings (to be emailed): Andrew Porter, “The South African War and the Historians,” *African Affairs* (2000); Andre Du Toit, “No Chosen people: The myth of the Calvinist origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racial ideology,” *American Historical Review* (1983).

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 158-173.

Some questions to consider when reading *Abraham Esau’s War*: Why was the Boer War/(Second) South African War (1899-1902) long known as a “white man’s” conflict? Does the author also sympathize with the plight of Boer combatants and their families? Did blacks fight equally for both sides in the South African War? Why didn’t the principal antagonists arm the black population? Why would some blacks prefer to fight for Queen and Country? What sources of power and justice did they seek to tap? What were black combatants promised for their service? Were some of these promises kept? How was black participation in the South African War determined by (different) regional race relations?

Week 8: Mar. 11: SPRING BREAK.

Week 9: Mar. 18: Rebel Savior or Mad Prophet?—Required book for Wed. Mar. 18th: Robert Edgar and Hilary Sapire, *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, A Twentieth-century South African Prophet*. ****Our class will discuss this book with one of the authors, Howard University Professor Robert Edgar; required article** (to be emailed to you): Karen Flint and Julie Parle, “Healing and harming: Medicine, madness, witchcraft and tradition,” in Carton et al. *Zulu Identities*.

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 195-203.

Some questions to consider when reading *African Apocalypse*: How do the revelations of Nontetha compare with those of Nongqawuse? Consider the parallel historical processes that give rise to a Xhosa-speaking prophetess in the middle nineteenth century and a Xhosa-speaking prophetess in the early twentieth century? How was Nontetha able to establish a spiritual movement during the deadly 1918 influenza pandemic? Did she evoke a version of Christianity that Nongqawuse would have embraced?

Why did Nontetha focus on social behavior and morality? Was Nontetha’s movement anti-colonial? What role did prominent Xhosa-speaking religious men play in disseminating her visions? Was her movement “hijacked” by Xhosa patriarchs? Do you think white authorities believed Nontetha was mentally ill, or did they use the pretext of her “madness” to curb her activism? How did officials in the South African state ensure that black women suffer disproportionately from “social dis-ease”? In your opinion, did the racist treatment of black South African women make them more vulnerable than black South African men to accusations of “mental illness”?

SECTION FOUR: Ideologies of Power in 20th-century South Africa

Week 10: Mar. 25: The Grammar of Institutional Racism—Required book for Wed. Mar 25th: Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*.

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 183-195, 210-214.

Some questions to consider when reading *Scientific Racism*: Does Dubow re-establish the importance of race (as opposed to class) in modern South African historiography? Does the comparative historical dimension (i.e., Dubow's analysis of racial science in the United States and Europe) enhance the book's main argument?

Why did some early-20th-century academics, i.e., anthropologists, psychologists, and scholars of education, link mental defects to racial classifications? Why were "poor whites" the target of both "scientific" study and social ridicule during the era of segregation? Were the eugenics movement and Social Darwinism more instrumental in creating social inequality than capitalist development? Do you think the origins of apartheid are rooted primarily in "racial science"?

Week 11: April 1: Black Elites and the Forging of "People's Power"—

Required book for Wed. April 1st: Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*; **required book chapter**: Nomboniso Gasa, "Feminisms, motherisms, patriarchies and women's voices in the 1950s," in Gasa, *Women in South African History*.

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 204-207, 232-239. If you have time, please consult some relevant primary sources stored on <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/hisdocs1.html>

Some questions to consider when reading *Black Power*: Why did the ANC split between "realists" and "rebels"? Was the "Youth League" expressing the true aspirations of youths, or channeling radical sentiment of the time? Did the "non-racial," socialist principles of the Lembede-Tambo-Sisulu-Mandela lineage break the path for future black nationalists, who were deeply suspicious of the intentions of sympathetic whites and other "non-white" South Africans (i.e., Indians and Coloureds)? How did communism influence ANC politics around the time of the Youth League?

SECTION FIVE: Microcosms of Nation

Week 12: April 8: Conserving Land in a World of Scarcity: The

Environmental Politics of Modern South Africa—Required book for Wed. April 8th: Jacob Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change: Environmental Relations in the Making of the Transkei*; **required book chapter** (to be emailed): Shirley Brooks, "Royal precedents and landscape midwives: Claiming the Zululand wilderness," in Carton, et al, *Zulu Identities*.

Some questions to consider when reading *Natures of Colonial Change*: How does the author tackle the complex issue of agency? Are the landscapes described in *Nature of Colonial Change* anthropogenic—that is, the product of human action (i.e., revealing the cumulative effects of farming implements and production; controlled burning; forest management; etc.)? Or do natural catastrophes and long-established vegetation patterns largely determine the history examined by the author? Since Africans in this book struggle over scarce resources—even engaging in conflicts that accelerate soil erosion and other forms of degradation—could one argue that a major strategy of colonial "divide-and-rule" policies was to make oppressed people seek an anti-environmentalist, "pro-growth" agenda?

Week 13: April 15: Coming of Age through Labor Migrancy—Required book for Wed. April 15th: T. Dunbar Moodie and Vivian Ndatshe, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines and Migration*; **required book chapter**: Luli Callinicos, “Testimonies and transitions: Women negotiating the rural and urban in the mid-20th century,” in Gasa, *Women in South African History*. The following optional reading will be emailed: Mxolisi Mchunu, “A Modern Coming of Age: Zulu Manhood, Domestic Work, and the ‘Kitchen Suit,’” in Carton, et al, *Zulu Identities*; please also consider reading this optional book chapter: Caroline Wanjiku Khato, “Invisible lives, inaudible voices? The social conditions of migrant women in Johannesburg,” in Gasa, *Women in South African History*.

I also suggest you read Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa*, 215-231.

Some questions to consider when reading *Going for Gold*: What debates does this book seek to engage? What is the relationship between Moodie and Ndatshe? Where do you hear/read the voice of only one author? Why do Moodie and Ndatshe highlight the concepts of “generation” and “moral economy” in their analysis? Would you describe migrant laborers as displaced people or new men seeking networks of belonging? In your opinion, which sources—records or interviews, for example—produce the most convincing portraits of what “happened” in the migrant compounds? Do you think the authors accurately portray sexual socialization and intimacy (i.e., partnerships of reciprocity and affection such as “mine marriages”)?

Week 14: April 22: Chronicling the Unspeakable: HIV/AIDS in South Africa—Required book for Wed. April 22nd: Jonny Steinberg, *Sizwe’s Test: A Young Man’s Journey through Africa’s AIDS Epidemic*; **required book chapter** (to be emailed): Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, “AIDS in Zulu Idiom: Etiological configurations of women, pollution and modernity,” in Carton et al, *Zulu Identities*. Please consider the following optional readings: Nthabiseng Motsemme, “‘Loving in a time of hopelessness’: On township women’s subjectivities in a time of HIV/AIDS,” in Gasa, *Women in South African History*; (to be emailed): Mandisa Mbali, “AIDS discourses and the South African state: Government denialism and post-apartheid AIDS policy-making,” *Transformation* (2004).

Some questions to consider when reading *Sizwe’s Test*: Does the author successfully combine participatory observation (ethnography) with historical research? Why do you think the author grounded his analysis in South Africa’s colonial history? How does the author “historicize” stigma (for example, what past events does he reference to contextualize the recriminations/suspensions swirling around the characters in his book)? What books/articles (this semester) helped you understand the local dynamics of this story? Why is sexual intimacy such a taboo subject in rural South Africa (this is one of the organizing themes of *Sizwe’s Test*)? Are Christian teachings or traditional customs principally responsible for perpetuating this taboo? When medical experts advocate “safe sex” and warn against “unsafe sex,” are they contributing to the stigma surrounding AIDS? After reading this book, are you more or less hopeful that South Africans most susceptible to HIV transmission are developing a greater awareness of the cause and course of the pandemic?

Week 15: April 29: Review for final papers.