

## ANTH 355/555: China-Africa Encounters

Helen Siu and Susanna Fioratta

Spring 2013  
Tuesdays, 1:30-3:20

China has had a long history of aid and investment in the African continent. In assessing the challenges created by China's recent presence in Africa, comparisons with the historical role of European powers and the contemporary impact of neoliberal markets continue to grip public attention. New wealth in emerging economies, such as the Middle East region, India, and South Korea, also eyes the continent's land and natural resources and is watching China's moves. Deeper and less dichotomous understanding of the processes, at once economic, political, cultural and historical, is needed to rethink how globalization and an interconnected Asia are shaping the two continents in fundamentally different ways.

The seminar focuses on historically layered structures that linked China and Africa in a broad "Asian" context stretching over centuries. It cuts through policy polemics to focus on topics that require historically informed and ethnographically nuanced perspectives. It also avoids a "dual area studies" approach by including multicultural institutions and groups across Asia to contextualize the fluidity of China-Africa encounters. Specifically, it focuses on three interrelated themes.

1) **Diasporic Experiences:** social networks and cultural strategies of African and Chinese migrant communities in Guangzhou, Yiwu, Guinea and Nigeria. We explore issues of informal economies and tensions arising from race, ethnicity, religion, language, family, and how mobile populations cope with social and political insecurities.

2) **Land, Finance, Infrastructure, and Daily Lives.** Topics include global webs of finance for Chinese investments in Africa; how Chinese traders develop electronic and other goods markets in West Africa; social implications of land grabs and agribusiness; how infrastructure for oil and electricity projects set up by Chinese enterprises are perceived by local society as compared with investments from other Western and Asian countries.

3) **The Meaning of Aid.** With a diverse history of aid from the US and European countries as background, we examine the institutional and discursive aspects of aid from China to Africa from the 1960s to today. We trace the changes in medical aid and charities in Africa: from

government to NGOs, from developing bio-medical structures to Chinese medicine as alternatives.

In general, the seminar uses China-Africa encounters to rethink inter-regional studies of culture and development, and to promote interdisciplinary interests.

### **Required Texts**

Please purchase these books online or at the Yale bookstore.

Alden, Chris. 2007. *China in Africa*. Zed Books.

Brautigam, Deborah. 2009. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford University Press.

Harney, Alexandra. 2008. *The China Price: The True Cost of China's Competitive Advantage*. Penguin Books.

Mathews, Gordon. 2011. *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong*. University of Chicago Press.

### **Other required readings**

Chapters and articles marked in the syllabus with an asterisk (\*) are available on the course website on Classes v.2.

**Expectations and Grading:** Assigned readings will be approximately 150 pages per week. Students are expected to complete all readings and come to class prepared to engage actively with the material in group discussions.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

Midterm paper, 5-7 pages: 25%

Oral presentation: 25%

Final paper, 15-20 pages; 40%

Class participation 10%

## **Week 1. January 15. Introduction: Inter-regional Studies**

\*Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1992. "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1): 1-23.

\*Lewis, Martin W. and Kåren E. Wigen. 1997. "Introduction," in *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*, pp. 1-19.

Alden, Chris. 2007. *China in Africa*. Zed Books. *Begin as background reading*.

## **Week 2. January 22. Historical Linkages: Colonialism, Empire, and Trade**

Powerpoint on Inter-Asian Connections, Past and Present (Helen Siu)

\*Tagliacozzo, Eric. "China and Africa in the Earliest Centuries of Contact: Prolegomenon."

\*Brook, Timothy. 2007. Ch. 4, "Geography Lessons," in *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*. pp. 84-116.

\*Metcalf, Thomas R. 2007. "Introduction: Empire Recentered," in *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920*. University of California Press, pp. 1-15. \*Middleton, John. 2004. Ch. 3, "The Shape of Swahili Society" and Ch. 9, "Merchants," in *African Merchants of the Indian Ocean: Swahili of the East African Coast*, pp. 17-26, 79-90.

\*Curtin, Philip D. 1984. Ch. 2, "Africa: Incentives to Trade, Patterns of Competition," and Ch. 3, "Africa: Traders and Trade Communities," in *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, pp. 15-59.

## **Week 3. January 29. Contemporary Linkages: Neoliberal Connections**

Harney, Alexandra. 2008. *The China Price: The True Cost of China's Competitive Advantage*. (begin reading)

\*Ferguson, James. 2006. "Globalizing Africa? Observations from an Inconvenient Continent," pp. 25-49. In *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Duke University Press.

\*Simone, AbdouMaliq. 2004. "Introduction: Remaking African Cities," pp. 1-20, in *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Duke University Press.

\*Crampton, Thomas. 2007. "A Web Cadre Turns the Tables on African Scam Artists," *The New York Times*, July 2.

\*Simpfendorfer, Ben. 2009. *The New Silk Road: How a Rising Arab World is Turning Away from the West and Rediscovering China*. Palgrave Macmillan. Ch. 1, "The New Silk Road," pp. 7-27, and Ch. 8, "Implications for the West: A New Center of Gravity," pp. 154-173.

#### **Week 4. February 5. China in Africa as Partner and Friend.**

\*Moyo, Dambisa. 2010. *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Read excerpts: “The Republic of Dongo,” “A Radical Rethink of the Aid-Dependency Model,” “A Capital Solution,” “The Chinese Are Our Friends,” and “Let’s Trade,” pp.71-125.

Brautigam, Deborah. 2009. “Rogue Donor? Myths and Realities,” pp. 273-306 in *The Dragon’s Gift*.

See also Brautigam’s blog:

Brautigam, Deborah. “China in Africa: The Real Story.” <http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com>

\*Rupp, Stephanie. 2008. “Africa and China: Engaging Postcolonial Interdependencies,” in *China Into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg, Brookings Institution Press, pp. 65-86.

#### **Week 5. February 12. China in Africa as Neo-Imperial Power**

Michel, Serge, Michel Beuret, Paolo Woods. 2010. *China Safari: On the Trail of Beijing's Expansion in Africa*. Nation Books.

\* Ch 5, “Trouble Governing? Outsource to China!” pp. 71-94

\* Ch 7, “An Invasion of Junk,” pp. 113-129

\* Ch 8, “For Sale: Weapons for Dictators (Made in China),” pp. 131-144

\* Ch 12, “The Chinese Locomotive Begins to Lose Steam,” pp. 209-232

\*French, Howard W. 2010. *The Next Empire. The Atlantic*.

\*Lee, C.K. 2009. “Raw Encounters: Chinese Managers, African Workers and the Politics of Casualization in Africa’s Chinese Enclaves,” *China Quarterly* vol 199, pp 647-666.

\*Matondi, Prosper B., Kjell Havnevik, and Atakilte Beyene. 2011. “Introduction: Biofuels, Food Security and Land Grabbing in Africa,” in *Biofuels, Land Grabbing and Food Security in Africa*, Zed Books, pp. 1-19.

\*Meyer, Nathan William. “China’s Dangerous Game: Resource Investment and the Future of Africa.” *International Policy Digest*. October 9, 2012

#### **Week 6. February 19. Africans in China**

\*Whitehouse, Bruce. 2012. *Migrants and Strangers in an African City*. Indiana University Press. Excerpt from “Introduction: Exile Knows No Dignity,” pp. 1-6.

\*Pelican, Michaela and Peter Tawah. 2009, "Migration to the Gulf States and China: Local Perspectives from Cameroon," *African Diaspora* 2:229-244.

\*Osno, Evan. "The Promised Land. (Guangzhou's Canaan market), " *The New Yorker*, 85.1 (Feb 9, 2009): 50.

\*Neuwirth, Robert. 2011. "The Global Back Channel" in *Stealth of Nations: the Global Rise of the Informal Economy*, pp 67-85. Pantheon Books.

\*National Public Radio. "An African Trader and the Perils of Business in China," April 26, 2012. Read the PDF of this story (and scan the readers'/listeners' commentary below it). You can also listen to the audio at: <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/26/151303230/an-african-trader-and-the-perils-of-business-in-china>.

\*Haugen, Heidi Østbø. 2012. Nigerians in China: A Second State of Immobility. *International Migration* 50(2):65-80.

\*Lyons, Michal, Alison Brown, and Li Zhigang. 2012. "In the Dragon's Den: African Traders in Ghangzhou." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38(5):869-888.

## **Week 7. February 26. China-Africa encounters through ethnography and Media**

**Professor Davis Watts (guest lecturer, on media reports of African forest ecology and trade in animals)**

Mathews, Gordon. *Ghetto at the Center of the World*

## **Week 8. March 5. China-Africa Encounters through film**

Film: When China Met Africa

**\*\*\*Midterm papers due March 5, 2013\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Spring break, March 9-24\*\*\***

## **Week 9. March 26. Development. Infrastructure and commodities: Railroads, roads, oil, mines**

\*Jamie Monson. 2009. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press. Chapter 1, "Introduction," pp.1-12; Chapter 3, "Building the People's Railway," pp. 35-70; Appendix 1, "Eight Principles Governing China's Economic and Technical Aid to Other Countries," pp. 157-158.

\*Davies, Martyn. 2008. "Special Economic Zones: China's Economic Model Comes to Africa," in Rotberg, pp. 137-154.

\*Siu, Helen. "Financing Chinese Business in Africa: New State Spaces"

\*Lee, Henry and Dan Shalmon. 2008. "Searching for Oil: China's Oil Strategies in Africa," in Rotberg pp. 87-108.

\*Mike Degani. "Bodaboda: China-Africa objects at different scales"

\**The Economist*. "More for my people: resource nationalism in Africa." February 11, 2012

\**The Economist*. "Wish you were mine: resource nationalism in Africa." February 11, 2012

\*BBC News. "Zambian miners kill Chinese manager during pay protest." August 5, 2012

\*BBC News. "Burma dam: Why Myitsone plan is being halted." September 30, 2011

### **Week 10. April 2. Development. Land and food security**

\*"Trying to Pull Together: Africans are asking whether China is making their lunch or eating it." *The Economist*, April 20, 2011.

\*Brautigam, Deborah. "The Chinese in Africa: The Economist Gets Some Things Right, Some Wrong." May 20, 2011. <http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/2011/05/chinese-in-africa-economist-gets-some.html>

\*Oxfam. "Land and Power: The Growing Scandal Surrounding the New Wave of Investments in Land," 151 Oxfam Briefing Paper, 22 September 2011. <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp151-land-power-rights-acquisitions-220911-en.pdf>

Brautigam, Chapters 9 & 10 in *The Dragon's Gift*

The World Bank. 2011. "Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?"

Yu Luo. "Poachers, Tourists and Activists: China's Role in African Wildlife Conservation"

For reference:

Buckley, Lila. 2011. "Eating Bitter to Taste Sweet: An Ethnographic Sketch of a Chinese Agriculture Project in Senegal." Paper Presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, 6-8 April 2011

### **Week 11. April 9. The Meaning of Aid**

\*Hsu, Elizabeth. 2008. "Medicine as Business: Chinese Medicine in Tanzania," pp. 221-235 in *China Returns to Africa: A Superpower and a Continent Embrace*, ed. Christopher Alden, Daniel Large, and Ricardo de Oliveira. C. Hurst & Co.

\*Minhua Ling. "Exporting Hope with Chinese Characteristics: The Chinese-Africa Hope Project in Dispute"

Brautigam, Ch 1 & Ch 4 in *The Dragon's Gift*

\*Liu, Philip Hsiao-pong. 2009. "Planting Rice on the Roof of the UN Building: Analysing Taiwan's 'Chinese' Techniques in Africa, 1961-present." *The China Quarterly* 198:381-400.

*Optional supplemental reading:*

\*Hsu, Elizabeth. 2002. "'The Medicine from China Has Rapid Effects': Chinese medicine patients in Tanzania." *Anthropology & Medicine* 9(3):291-313.

## **Week 12. April 16. Reconceptualizing China-Africa encounters: Colonial gaze, postsocialist gaze**

\*Mills, Sara. 1991. "Mary Kingsley: Travels in West Africa (1897)," in Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, pp. 153-174).

\*Mphahlele, Es'kia. 1997. "Mrs. Plum," pp. 91-124 in *Under African Skies: Modern African Stories*. Charles R. Larson, ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

\*Wei Jianguo. 2010. "African Affection Towards China," pp. 365-374; "Innovation in Cooperation Measures," pp.343-374. in *Africa: A Lifetime of Memories*. \*\*"African Fury Over Death in Custody," *South China Morning Post*, June 20, 2012.

\*\*"Nigerian Embassy Seeks Death in Custody Probe," *South China Morning Post*, June 21, 2012.

\*Osnos, Evan. "Got a Degree and an Idea? Go to China." *The New Yorker* blog, June 26, 2012. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/evanosnos/2012/06/got-a-degree-and-an-idea-go-to-china.html#entry-more>

## **Week 13. April 23. Research Proposal Presentations and Course Summary.**

\*\*\*Final papers due May 1\*\*\*