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.


**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


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

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


See also Brautigam’s blog:


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

* 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


Week 6. February 19. Africans in China

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


**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**


*Mike Degani. “Bodaboda: China-Africa objects at different scales”


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


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, Chapters 9 & 10 in The Dragon’s Gift


For reference:


Week 11. April 9. The Meaning of Aid

*Minhua Ling. “Exporting Hope with Chinese Characteristics: The Chinese-Africa Hope Project in Dispute” Brautigam, Ch 1 & Ch 4 in *The Dragon’s Gift*


Optional supplemental reading:


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


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

***Final papers due May 1***