

HI3K7-30 Society and Politics in Southern Africa

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Tom Lowman

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This 30 CATS Advanced Option module examines the history of southern Africa from the nineteenth century to the present, engaging with a range of approaches in history and the social sciences. The course spans pre-colonial, colonial and independent southern African societies and is structured around four themes which are central to the history and historiography of this region: labour and migration; urbanization and urban life; family life and domestic struggles; and political movements and protest.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

Structured around these four key themes, seminars will combine chronological and thematic coverage with focused analysis of the lives of individual men, women and children. We will examine social life, economies, culture and politics from the level of the household to the national and regional level, using secondary sources and a range of primary sources, including government documents, memoirs, novels, ethnography and the reports of international and non-governmental organisations. Central to our analysis will be consideration of how key social

categories and identities, including race, ethnicity, gender and age, have been constructed and challenged over time in the region and how these factors intersected and shaped social life, culture, politics and economics. This module engages with classic and cutting-edge scholarship in southern African studies and will provide students with the skills and opportunity to engage in independent research in the field of African history.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

1. Chronology and Themes in C19th and C20th Southern African History

Theme 1: Labour and Migration

2. Working the Land

[African gender divisions of labour in rural areas; colonial economics and cash cropping; master and servant laws; labour relations between black workers and white employers on white farms]

3. Mining and Masculinity

[Development of mining economies on the Witwatersrand (from 1880s) and the Copperbelt (from 1920s); living and working conditions for miners; racialisation of labour process; constructions of masculinity]

4. Maids and Madams

[Domestic workers and employers in South Africa and Zambia from late C19th to present; intersections of gender, race and class in making of labour relations; shifting gendering of this occupation over time]

5. 'Invisible Hands': Children and Labour

[Ubiquity of child labour across southern Africa yet an 'invisible' group of workers in labour history; gendering of child labour; discussion of contemporary efforts to eradicate child labour in the region and examination of NGO campaigning]

6. Reading Week

7. Mobility and Migration

[Changing patterns of labour migration in region from mid-C19th, particularly relating to mining but also domestic service and other industries; impacts on gender divisions of labour in rural areas; migration as both dividing and connecting communities]

Theme 2: Urbanisation and Urban Life

8. Segregation and the Racialisation of Urban Space

[Colonial-era segregation policies in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia; legislation; racialisation of space; pass laws; examples of breaking laws and crossing boundaries]

9. Gendering the City

[Gendering of urban space in relation to work, housing and facilities; women and girls' experiences of colonial cities in Zambia and Zimbabwe and their efforts to subvert racialised and gendered norms and the control of men and colonial authorities]

10. Urban Cultures and Social Life

[Development of 'new' urban identities in colonial towns and cities and impacts on race, ethnicity and gender; emergence of new music cultures, using Luanda, Angola and Johannesburg, South

Africa as case studies]

Term 2

11. Contemporary Urban Inequalities

[Remaking of urban inequalities after independence, from racialised to class-based urban socio-economic hierarchies; contemporary urban poverty; growth of urban informal economies from 1980s]

Theme 3: Family Life and Domestic Struggles

12. Children, Youth and Coming of Age

[Constructions of childhood in southern African societies; impacts of race and gender on children and youths' experiences and opportunities in colonial societies and apartheid South Africa; initiation ceremonies and transitions to adulthood]

13. Marriage

[centrality of marriage to social relationship in African societies; marital negotiations and bridewealth; impacts of colonialism and Christianisation on marriage practices; marriage across ethnic and racial boundaries and disputes over this]

14. Love and Sexuality

[Consideration of love and romance alongside sexuality; 'heterosexual' and same-sex sexual relationships; impacts of race on sexuality; contemporary movements for LGBTQ+ rights]

15. Gender-Based Violence

[gender-based violence in the region from C19th to present, including examination of colonial violence, legislation on domestic and sexual violence in colonial and post-colonial contexts, and recent efforts to combat endemic problem of gender-based violence in contemporary societies]

16. Reading Week

Theme 4: Political Movements and Protest

17. White Nationalism

[Politics and culture of whiteness in colonial Zimbabwe and pre-apartheid and apartheid South Africa; histories of white nationalist political parties in these contexts and their periods in office; gendered dimensions of white nationalism]

18. African Nationalism and Decolonisation

[Emergence of African nationalist movements and organisations from early C20th; growth of nationalist sentiment and power in post-WW2 period; Zambia and Malawi examined as case studies of decolonisation]

19. Wars of Liberation

[Examination of nationalist and anti-colonial movements' turn towards violence in the face of intransigent colonial regimes in Portuguese colonies and Zimbabwe; histories of liberation wars in Zimbabwe and Mozambique; gendered experiences of liberation movement fighters]

20. Fighting Apartheid

[Turn to armed struggle against the apartheid regime from 1960; underground movements; exile politics; Soweto Uprising and the role of children and youth; the gendering of anti-apartheid activism]

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the history of society and politics

in C19th and C20th southern Africa

- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of primary sources relating to southern African history and the experiences and perspectives of men, women and children in the southern African past
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, about how ideologies and practices surrounding race, ethnicity, gender and age have been constructed and challenged over time in C19th and C20th southern Africa
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas relating to the study of southern Africa

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Seminars	20 sessions of 2 hours (13%)	
Tutorials	4 sessions of 1 hour (1%)	
External visits	(0%)	1 session of
Private study	256 hours (85%)	
Total	300 hours	

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Seminar contribution	10%		No
Reassessment component			
1000 word reflection			Yes (extension)
Assessment component			
1500 word essay	10%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
3000 word source-based essay	40%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
3000 word essay	40%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Written comments and oral feedback will be provided for all assignments.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)