

## Instructions for students

### \*Validating this course\*

#### *Participation criteria*

This is not an evaluative course. 'Participation' is what validates the course.

'Participation' criteria: attend the course, and make at least one oral presentation.

There may not be enough texts for everyone to present on an individual basis. You may pair up to present an article (for guidelines on how to present an article, see Blackboard >> Kursmaterial).

#### *End of term papers*

You may choose to write an end of term paper with me (for guidelines on end of term papers see Blackboard >> Kursmaterial).

If you do not choose to write an end of term paper with me, this means you will write a paper in another course of the module to complete the module.

You will receive 10 ECTS for the completed module. In terms of ECTS, what is counted will be the completed module.

*In any case, a student cannot just write a paper, without coming to the classes and fulfilling the participation criteria.*

#### *For Erasmus Students:*

You will get 3 ECTS for completing the participation requirements of this course, and 7 ECTS if you need to write a paper with me at the end of the semester. In case you are not in the Campus Management system, the exam office will not state any number of credits on the certificate "Papierschein" (paper certificate). What is certified is only 'participation' or 'participation and the grade.' The Erasmus students have to present all their certificates at the Erasmus office and then will get a transcript with ECTS credits.

In case you are in doubt, write to the Department to get more detailed information.

### \*Practical information\*

This is a weekly 90-minute course composed of **two oral presentations (approx. 10 minutes each)** followed by a **discussion**, and a **lecture**. It will take place at **2.15-3.45pm on Thursdays**.

#### *Oral presentations:*

1. Sign up for the text of your choice on the Wiki page. You can team up with another person to present if you wish to do so (2 people by presentation maximum). You can find guidelines on how to present an article on Blackboard >> Kursmaterial.
2. Share your Powerpoint document (preferably as a pdf file) to the group **before the class**.

#### *Interaction online:*

For interaction on Webex: keep your microphones mute at all time. When you wish to speak/ask a question/respond to a question, ask to speak in the chat space, wait for me to give you the floor, then unmute your microphone for the duration of your intervention.

There is a code of conduct for online courses that you can consult here: [https://www.fu-berlin.de/universitaet/profil/studium\\_lehre/code-of-conduct/index.html](https://www.fu-berlin.de/universitaet/profil/studium_lehre/code-of-conduct/index.html)

*Absence:*

If you were meant to present an article but are unable to do so, please contact me as soon as possible.

## **Borders in Africa: Myths and Realities**

This seminar proposes to explore and assess myths and realities of borders in Africa. It will provide students with analytical and empirical knowledge necessary to evaluate and analyse issues pertaining to borders. After exploring the theoretical and historical trajectories of borders, it addresses connections between borders and different themes such as: border actors, conflict, secessionism, but also refugees and livelihoods. Weekly case studies will be analysed in connection with these themes, to which students will be asked to participate. The course will be conducted entirely in English, including assessments.

### **PART I: Definitions and history of concepts**

- W1: Introduction: What is a border?

This session will be devoted to definitions and basic concepts that will be central to this module such as border, frontier, state, sovereignty, nation-state. What is a border? Is a border a line, a barrier? If so, to what extent? The session will emphasise the porous nature of borders and their artificial character in a general context, and will explore the main attributes given to borders in Africa outside of academia.

- W2: Pre-colonial borders in Africa

While it is a common assumption that the notion of *border* or *limit* in Africa is an imported Western notion, we will assess to what extent this is the case by looking at Africa's pre-colonial boundaries or limits. We will look in particular how pre-colonial polities were geographically and politically defined.

*Readings:*

Herbst, J. (2000) 'Power and Space in Precolonial Africa' (Chap.2) in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (STU-Student edition, 2), Princeton University Press.

Dobler, G. (2008) 'Boundary drawing and the notion of territoriality in pre-colonial and early colonial Ovamboland', *Journal of Namibian Studies* 3: 7-30.

- W3: The origins of colonial borders in Africa 1: the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The most common image that comes to mind when thinking about colonial borders is the representation of Western heads of state sharing Africa like a cake, symbolising the arbitrariness and outside imposition of borders in Africa. This session focuses on exploring how the location of borders was decided in Africa, and by whom. This will lead us to look at the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 in particular.

*Readings:*

Herbst, J. (2000) 'The Europeans and the African Problem' (Chap.3) in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (STU-Student edition, 2), Princeton University Press.

Ajala A. (1983) 'The nature of African boundaries,' *Africa Spectrum* 18(2): 177-189.

- W4: The origins of colonial borders in Africa 2: the post-war period and the OAU (Organisation of African Unity)

It is widely recognised that borders in Africa have been decided without the consent of the population. This session will examine this notion against the backdrop of Trust Territories borders in particular. After WW1, the Allied Forces (mostly France and the UK) were given the responsibility to administer former German colonies, and these territories were placed under the authority of the League of Nations and the United Nations. The borders of these territories were then redefined by administering powers, sometimes in consultation with the population, when the right to self-determination was becoming important, and the right of petition was made available to the population. This made it more difficult for Western powers to decide on these borders unilaterally. In 1964, the Organisation of African Unity decided that borders inherited from colonisation would have to remain intangible.

*Readings:*

Nugent P. (1996) 'Arbitrary lines and the people's minds - a dissenting view on colonial boundaries in West Africa' in Asiwaju and Nugent (eds) *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, African Studies Association of the United Kingdom, University of Edinburgh, & African boundaries and borderlands (Conference).

Touval S. (2009) 'The Organization of African Unity and African Borders,' *International Organization* 21(1): 102-127.

- W5: How comparable are borders in Africa?

It is often thought that borders in Africa are too different to Western borders to compare them because of the way they have been imposed in Africa. This session will explore to what extent borders may be comparable. We will look at different kinds of borders in Africa and in the world, and assess their comparability.

*Readings:*

Asiwaju A. (2012) 'The African Union Border Programme in European' (chap. 4), in Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (eds) *A Companion to Border Studies*, Wiley- Blackwell.

Coplan, D.B. (2010) 'First meets third: Analyzing inequality along the US-Mexico and South Africa-Lesotho borders,' *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25(2): 53-64.

## **PART II: Actors and borders: the state and the people**

- W6: Borders, bordering and the state

Borders are often thought as places of heavy state control where state agents and travellers are dissociated and classified in two distinct categories. We will look at cases where the margins are places of disorder where the state and its relations with travellers, brokers, and borderlands are more complex than previously conceived.

*Readings:*

Raeymaekers T. (2012) 'Reshaping the state in its margins: the state, the market and the

subaltern on a central African frontier,' *Critique of Anthropology* 32(3): 334-350.

Roitman J. (2004) 'Productivity in the Margins: The Reconstitution of State Power in the Chad Basin', in D. Poole and V. Das (eds.) *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, Santa Fe, School of American Research Press.

- W7: Borders and people 1

In this session, we will address the notion that borders represent an impediment for groups sharing a common identity and hinder their movement. While border posts do filter the passage of people or signify a separation, the border is not policed all along the 'line'. Border villages and towns located in these borderlands have integrated the border in their identity and their daily lives to develop their livelihoods (which we will explore in more detail next session). There are cross-border fields where farmers cross daily to farm their lands on the other side. Cross-border chieftaincies also remained despite the border. Trade, funerals, weddings and family cross-border networks continued despite the border.

*Readings:*

Flynn, D. K. (1997) "'We are the Border": Identity, Exchange, and the State Along the Benin-Nigeria Border', *Journal of the American Ethnological Society*, 24(2): 311-330.

Adotey E. (2018) 'International Chiefs': Chieftaincy, Rituals and the Reproduction of Transborder Ewe Ethnic Communities on the Ghana-Togo Boundary', *Africa* 88(3): 560-578.

- W8: Borders and people 2

In this session, we will focus on cross-border trade. Cross-border trade is more often informal than formal, and is often described as smuggling. However, much informal cross-border trade is essential for border populations' day-to-day survival. We will analyse the conceptual difference between formal/informal, and explore the organisation of border zones between different kinds of actors (state actors, border-crossers, brokers).

*Readings:*

Dobler G. (2016) 'The green, the grey and the blue: a typology of cross-border trade in Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 54(1): 145-169.

Gumbo B.G. (2012) 'Combining Multiple Livelihood Strategies in Cross-border Trade at Kasane, 1980-2000,' *Botswana Notes and Records* 44: 60-69.

- W9: The history of border studies

This session will focus on how border studies have evolved from a state-centric perspective to a borderland perspective, emphasising the agency of border people, and the very rich dynamics of borderlands that used to be otherwise overlooked in the study of borders.

*Readings:*

Kolossov V. (2005) 'Theorizing borders. Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches,' *Geopolitics* 10: 606-632.

Baud M. and Van Schendel W. (1997) 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,' *Journal of World History* 8(2): 211-242.

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## ***Christmas break***

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### **PART III: Borders and conflict**

- W10: Borders and disputes

Border disputes and conflicts arose in Africa in the postcolonial period. This session will look at particular cases and will focus on the role of natural resources in these disputes. It will also assess the role of colonial borders in these disputes.

#### *Readings:*

Konings P. (2011) 'Settling border conflicts in Africa peacefully: Lessons learned from the Bakassi dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria' (chap.10), in Jan Abbink, Jon Abbink and Mirjam de Bruijn (eds) *Land, Law and Politics in Africa: Mediating Conflict and Reshaping the State*, Brill.

Okumu W. (2010) 'Resources and border disputes in Eastern Africa', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4(2): 279-297.

- W11: Borders and secessionism

Since independence, secessionism has been a temptation in Africa. We will look at some particular case studies including South Sudan, the Tuaregs in Mali and Cameroon's Anglophone regions' claim for secession.

#### *Readings:*

Schomerus M. and de Vries L. (2019) 'A state of Contradiction: Sudan's Unity Goes South' (chap. 15), in Lotje de Vries, Pierre Englebert, and Mareike Schomerus (eds) *Secessionism in African Politics: Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, Disenchantment*, Palgrave Series in African Borderlands Studies.

Lecocq B. and Klute G. (2019) 'Tuareg Separatism in Mali and Niger' (chap.2), in Lotje de Vries, Pierre Englebert, and Mareike Schomerus (eds) *Secessionism in African Politics: Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, Disenchantment*, Palgrave Series in African Borderlands Studies.

- W12: Borders, refugees and the state

While borders can represent a safe haven for populations fleeing conflict or persecution, this is not always a reality. This session will focus on aspects of (in)security that the status of refugee or that the border may represent for people.

#### *Readings:*

Ciabarrri L. (2008) 'Productivity of Refugee Camps: Social and Political Dynamics from the Somaliland Ethiopia Border (1988-2001)', *Africa Spectrum* 43(1): 67-90.

Bakewell, O. (2007) 'The Meaning and Use of Identity Papers: Handheld and Heartfelt nationality in the borderlands of North-West Zambia', IMI Working Paper, University of Oxford.

## **PART IV: Crossing borders**

- W13: Borders and transnationalism

When borders are crossed, transnational networks are constructed and maintained. We will define the notion of transnationalism and focus on the particular case of cross-border voting, and trace the importance of transnational identity in oral tradition.

### *Readings:*

Edem Adotey (2020) “‘Operation Eagle Eye’: Border Citizenship and Cross-border Voting in Ghana’s Fourth Republic”, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

Greene S. (2002) ‘Notsie Narratives: History, Memory and Meaning in West Africa,’ *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(4): 1015-1041.

- W14: Borders and trafficking

When borders are porous, they are used by different kinds of actors. In this session, we will explore the illicit traffic of goods and persons: human trafficking and drug trafficking. We will also analyse the issues arising from the diverse definitions of what constitutes trafficking, especially when culture is used as an argument to oppose the universalism of human rights and the intervention of NGOs.

### *Readings:*

Bello P. O. and Olutola A. A. (2021) ‘The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa’ (chap. 2), in Jane Reeves (ed.) *Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*, Books on Demand.

Akyeampong E. (2005) ‘Diaspora and Drug Trafficking in West Africa: A Case Study of Ghana’, *African Affairs* 104(416): 429-447.

- W15: Borders and transnational extremist organisations

The porosity of borders in Africa facilitates transnational threats to African states. This session will look at the notion of territory of transnational extremist organisations, and analyse the kind of state responses that countries have put in place to combat them. We will look at the particular cases of Boko Haram, Al Qaeda and the Islamic state.

### *Readings:*

Walther O. J. and Miles W.F.S. (2018) ‘Introduction: States, Borders and Political Violence in Africa’ in Olivier Walther and William Miles (eds) *African Border Disorders: Addressing Transnational Extremist Organizations*, Routledge Studies in African Politics and International Relations.

Miles W.F.S. (2018) ‘Jihads and borders: Social networks and spatial patterns in Africa, present, past and future’ (chap. 9), in Olivier Walther and William Miles (eds) *African Border Disorders: Addressing Transnational Extremist Organizations*, Routledge Studies in African Politics and International Relations.

- W16: Methodology session on the essay.

This last session will be devoted to a general closing interactive discussion on borders in Africa, and to the methodology of the essay.

*Reading:*

Englebert P., Tarango S. and Carter M. (2002) 'Dismemberment and Suffocation: A contribution to the Debate on African Boundaries', *Comparative Political Studies* 35(10): 1093-1118.

**Other useful readings/websites:**

<https://www.aborne.net/bibliography>

*The Journal of Borderland Studies*

Wilson T. M. and Donnan H. (eds) *A Companion to Border Studies*, Wiley- Blackwell.

Brunet-Jailly E. (2005) 'Theorizing Borders: An interdisciplinary Perspective,' *Geopolitics* 10:633-649.

Grundy-Warr C. and Schofield C. (2005) 'Forty Years on: Revisiting Border studies. Reflections on the Relevance of Classic Approaches and Contemporary Priorities in Boundary Studies', *Geopolitics* 10: 650-662.