Southern Africa in perspective: Issues of national construction and development

Course description:

1st Topic: Presentation of the region

Introduction: why studying Southern Africa?

I- What is Southern Africa?
   1- A region, what region?
   2- A geographic coherence (topography, agricultural and mineral resources)
   3- A region shaped by British imperialism

II- Historical background: patterns of colonisation
   1- Early colonial times: the Portuguese African Empire, the founding of Cape Town and Dutch settlement
   2- Britain’s domination: from the Great Trek to the conquest of Rhodesia
   3- The Boer war and the creation of the Union of South Africa

2nd Topic: when Southern Africa was White Africa

I- South Africa (and Namibia)
   1- Before 1948
   2- The election of the National party
   3- Entrenching apartheid

II- Southern Rhodesia
   1- The British South Africa company rule
   2- Settlers’ rule
   3- The rebellion against Britain

III- Mozambique
   1- Portuguese colonisation
   2- Resisting the wind of change
   3- The Carnation revolution and independence

IV- The former High Commission Territories (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland)
   1- A protected status within the British empire
   2- Surviving as independent states in White Africa

3rd Topic: A region shaped by the anti-apartheid struggle

I- Internal resistance
   1- The armed struggle
   2- Riots and civil disobedience
   3- The role of religion, art and culture

II- Regional and international mobilization
   1- The Frontline states
   2- International pressure against apartheid

III- Consequences for the region
   1- A region at war: South Africa strikes back
   2- A culture of racial confrontation
   3- Liberation politics v. reform politics

4th Topic: Dealing with the past: the challenge of national construction

I- The end of the “settler states”
   1- The independence of Zimbabwe
      1-1 From UDI to Rhodesia-Zimbabwe
      1-2 The Lancaster House agreement
      1-3 National unity v. democracy
      2- 1994: the advent of the “rainbow nation”?
         2-1 The end of apartheid
         2-2 The first democratic election and Nelson Mandela’s presidency
         2-3 Economic reforms

   II- South Africa’s success, Zimbabwe’s failure?
      1- The South African truth and reconciliation commissions: a model?
         1-1 Truth and reconciliation in South Africa
         1-2 Assessment of the work of the commission
      2- The Zimbabwean crisis: assessing the weight of the past
         2-1 The problem of land ownership
         2-2 The rise of the MDC
         2-3 Stifled opposition: the coalition government

5th Topic: South Africa, a cumbersome neighbour?
I- South Africa today

1- An economic power
1-1 An emergent economy
1-2 The region’s economic engine
1-3 The region’s hub

2- A political power
2-1 A model democracy in Africa
2-2 A reference for Africa

3- The limits of South Africa’s success story
3-1 Enduring economic inequalities
3-2 Identity issues and xenophobia

II- One of us or one among us?

1- An ambiguous position in African politics
2- South Africa’s role in the Zimbabwean crisis

3- The limits of multilateralism
4- Jacob Zuma’s election: a new era?

6th Topic: A common past, common interests, a regional dynamics?

I- The impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on the region

1- The ambiguous position of Zimbabwe’s neighbours
2- A new racial configuration for the region?
3- Impact on the other countries’ own domestic policies

II- Finding a coherence beyond past solidarities

1- New initiatives for a new image
2- New challenges fostering co-operation
3- Civil society as a vector for regional action
4- The limits of regional co-operation

Conclusion: Southern Africa in Africa

Selected bibliography:

- Baines Gary, Vale Peter, Beyond the border war: new perspectives on Southern Africa’s late-cold war conflicts, 2009
- Bradshaw York W., Ndegwa Stephen (eds), The Uncertain promise of Southern Africa, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000
- Chan Steven, Southern Africa: Old Treacheries and New Deceits, 2009
- Mandela Nelson, Long Walk to Freedom,
- Shore Megan, Religion and conflict resolution : Christianity and South Africa’s TRC, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009

Fiction:
- Peter Abrahams, The Path of Thunder, 1948
- Andre Brink, A Dry, White Season, 1979
- Andre Brink, Imaginings of Sand, 1996
- Breyten Breytenbach, A Season in Paradise, 1976
- John Maxwell Coetzee, Waiting for the Barharians, 1980
- John Maxwell Coetzee, Disgrace, 1999
- Achmat Dangor, Bitter Fruit, 2001
- Nadine Gordimer, Burger’s daughter, 1979
- Ingrid Jonker, Black Butterflies, Selected Poems, 2007 (poems)
- Doris Lessing, The Grass is Singing, 1950
- Zake Mda, She Plays with the Darkness, 1995
- Phaswane Mpe, Welcome To Our Hillbrow, 2001
- Oswald Mbuyisini Mtshali, Sounds of a Cowhide Drum, 1972 (poems)
- Alan Paton, Cry the Beloved Country, 1948
- Sol Plaatje, Muhdi, (1930) 2005 (full version)

Movies:
- A Dry, White Season, dir. Euzhan Palcy, 1989
- Red Dust, dir. Tim Hooper, 2005
- Tsotsi, dir. Gavin Hood, 2006
- Invictus, dir. Clint Eastwood, 2009
Southern Africa in perspective: Issues of national construction and development

This course proposes an introduction to historical, political and economic stakes the Southern African region – and more specifically, South Africa and her closest neighbours Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia – is today confronted to.

South Africa and her neighbours are linked by a common past marked by the struggle for independence and against racial discrimination. Southern Africa was also White Africa, as important White communities had settled there and were still dominating the political life of some of the countries in the region in the last decades of the 20th century, well after the end of the decolonization process in the rest of Africa. The political deadlock in Zimbabwe can attest to the toll taken by history on the new emerging multi-racial societies and politics. Indeed, this crisis goes far beyond the problem of an aging dictator and lays emphasis on the fragility of post-colonial transitions and the difficulty to build a national identity beyond the notion of struggle against racism. The Zimbabwean crisis has shown how fragile reconciliation processes can be, and looms as a permanent threat on South Africa’s apparently successful transition. In spite of the tremendous growth of South Africa as the area’s giant, the future of the region is still uncertain, as the countries have to manage a chaotic past as well as day-to-day social and economic problems. Understanding to what extent the past still influences the present helps to get to grips with the different political, social, economic and identity stakes to which the countries of Southern Africa are confronted to.

Since the emergence of South Africa as a regional power since 1994, the question of the coherence of Southern Africa as a regional entity has been raised. The regional dynamics initiated during the struggle against discrimination and segregation from the 1960s on was mainly centripetal, or introverted, with the circle of White dominated territories progressively shrinking around South Africa. When the last stronghold of White domination fell in 1994, this regional dynamic changed to become centrifugal, or extroverted, with South Africa no longer being a repellent and the object of all attentions, but a driving force. The future of this new dynamics therefore depends largely upon South Africa’s democratic transition and the building of its multiracial identity, and upon its ability to gather her neighbours without crushing them. South Africa will therefore be given a central attention.

Développement économique et construction nationale : l’Afrique australe en perspective.

Ce cours propose une étude des enjeux historique, politique et économique auxquels sont confrontés les pays de la région d’Afrique australe, et plus particulièrement l’Afrique du sud et ses voisins immédiats.

L’Afrique du sud et ses voisins sont liés par un passé commun de lutte pour l’indépendance et contre la discrimination raciale. L’Afrique australe était aussi l’Afrique blanche, avec de fortes communautés européennes dominantes politiquement jusqu’aux dernières décennies du 20ème siècle en Afrique du sud, au Zimbabwe (Rhodésie du sud) ou en Namibie. Mais le passé demeure un héritage difficile à gérer, comme en témoigne la crise zimbabwéenne, qui va au-delà du problème d’un dictateur vieillissant pour remettre en avant la fragilité des processus de transition post-coloniale et la difficulté de construire une identité nationale en dehors de la lutte contre le racisme. Le Zimbabwe parce qu’il est actuellement ravagé par une crise politique et économique autant qu’identitaire, pose la question de la fragilité des processus de réconciliation et de gestion du passé colonial. Comprendre comment le passé continue d’influencer le présent permettra de mieux appréhender les différents défis politiques, sociaux, économiques et identitaires, auxquels les pays de la région doivent faire face aujourd’hui.

L’émergence de l’Afrique du sud en tant que puissance régionale depuis 1994 permet de s’interroger sur la cohérence d’une entité régionale d’Afrique australe. La dynamique régionale initiée lors d’une lutte concentrée contre la discrimination et l’apartheid dont l’Afrique du sud demeurait le dernier verrou, a dû se transformer en une dynamique d’extraversion, avec toujours l’Afrique du sud au centre, mais cette fois jouant le rôle de moteur et non de repoussoir. L’avenir de cette nouvelle dynamique dépend ainsi largement du succès de la transition démocratique et de la reconstruction identitaire de l’Afrique du sud et de sa capacité à rassembler ses voisins sans les écraser, d’où la place centrale qui sera réservée à l’Afrique du sud dans ce cours.