

**Youth Culture and Education in Botswana: Tentative Course Syllabus**  
AMC Botswana Program: University Immersion in Southern Africa

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Botswana bordered by Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa is comparable in size to France, with a population of nearly two million. Independent since 1966, as a country noted for its high economic growth and perceived western development, it has many distinguishing characteristics worth investigating. For example, Botswana people speak 28 languages and many speakers are trilingual; they speak the official language (English), the national language (Setswana), and a local language. By utilizing trifocal language patterns, Botswana people have advantages over monolingual Americans, but at the same time they may be at a distinct disadvantage when they try to negotiate the formal education system. Why? While a few upwardly mobile Botswana have easy access to globalized geographical spaces, others, such as those in Francistown may face the same types of squatter issues as someone living in the *gecekondu* in Istanbul, Turkey. Why is this the case? In November 1994 a brutal murder of a 14-year old female in Mochudi, Botswana caused a cultural crisis that was debated in the newspapers. Subsequent to the event, there were riots, rumors, and outright denials, which suggest that Botswana society had a challenging time trying to come to terms with the changes in family structures, shifts in gender roles, differences in group status, and revolutions in youth culture. What is happening to the youth, and why has this population targeted as problematic?

In order to bring these situations under more scrutiny, the purpose of reading, discussing, and experiencing aspects of Botswana in this course will be to address specific themes, which include township and rural spaces, student political movements, indigenous knowledge, media's role in society, immigration issues, language and literacy education, and religious and gender in schools. The approach to investigating these topics will be based on concepts from sociology, anthropology, linguistics, history, the arts, political science, economics, and literature. Readings will often be provided by Botswana scholars, and a local/global analysis and interpretation will be developed through discussions, guest lectures, student presentations, writing, and field study. As the semester unfolds, the expectation is that we will be building a rich vocabulary of terms, which describe a wide range of theoretical positions, and will promote a full spectrum of opinions and interpretations among participants. The focus will be on expanding complexity and generating multiple conclusions to increase the depth of understanding, as participants are not expected to become definitive experts but rather thoughtful, careful, and respectful scholars.

To this end, this course will include discussions that require participants to attend classes regularly, to be active conversationalists, and to engage as critical readers, listeners, and observers. At times, the schedule may deviate from the syllabus, in order to accommodate guest speaker(s) and/or to engage in on-site visits. However, the assigned readings are to be read and digested regardless of schedule changes, as they provide a foundation from which Botswana experiences can be analyzed and understood. More specific details will be provided for each of the assignments listed, and due dates will be provided at the first class meeting.

#### Assignments:

1. Discussion leader for two topics for the semester: In order to facilitate the readings, you will be presenting a summary of the readings, directing a discussion on prepared questions, and providing a vocabulary and concept handout (or providing a power point, overhead, visual).
2. Short interview on social/cultural life in Botswana: When you read Bessie Head's *Serowe: Village of Rain Wind*, you will get a sense of a rural community and its history, education, family structures, and occupations. Interview someone in the community and focus on the social/culture contributions s/he makes. Look to Head's entries for a guide as to how to approach your subject.
3. Critical Paper: Take any student at UB and inquire about the language(s), s/he speaks. Focus on a language issue and write-up what you learned first-hand through your discussion; put it in the context of a class reading on language.
4. Response Paper: After you have participated in a scheduled music, art, or dance event, write up a summary and critique of the event. Emphasize the cultural aspect(s) that you found most rewarding.
5. Six-page research paper: Take an issue on the topic of media, indigenous knowledge, or immigration and write a very focused piece. Provide at least five sources--only two of which may be websites--include a "Works Cited" section.
6. Oral presentation: You will have visited an educational site in Botswana. Critique the education in terms of how indigenous knowledge did or did not play a part in the experience and also critique aspects of knowledge production in which students participated.

Grading: 200 pts

Discussion Leader 10+10 pts

Short Interview 30 pts

Critical Paper 30 pts

Response Paper 30 pts

Research Paper 50 pts

Oral Presentation 20 pts

Attendance and Participation 20 pts

A 93-100%, A minus 90-92%,  
B plus 87-89%, B 83-86%, B minus 80-82%  
C plus 77-79%, C 73-76%, C minus 70-72%  
D plus 67-69%, D 63-67%, D minus 60-62%

Attendance and Participation Policies: Students are expected to attend all classes and also to participate in discussions at every class meeting. Missed classes will affect a student's grade, as per the limit of absences set at the beginning of the semester. No late assignments will be accepted.

#### Course Topics:

Greeting and Meeting Botswana Youth  
Township Issues for Youth: Considering the Moral Foundation of Vulnerable Youth  
Rural Life in Botswana as Seen by a Young Botswana Writer  
Student Movements: Activist and Radical Responses  
The Significance of African Language Development  
Language Issues in Botswana  
The Role of Media  
Botswana Culture: Music, Art and Dance  
Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Production  
The Global Challenge of Educating Immigrant Youth in Botswana  
Religious Education in Botswana

Required Texts: to be purchased prior attending the first class

Abosi C. Okechukwu. and Itah Kandjii-Murangi, eds. (1995). *Education in Botswana: A Reading Text*. Macmillan Botswana Publishing. (available in Gaborone)

Batibo, Herman. (2005). *Language Decline and Death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Head, Bessie. (1981). *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

## Tentative Course Readings (ACM Botswana)

### **Week One:**

#### An Introduction to Botswana and Its Youth

Giddings, Carla and Hovorka, Alice. (2010). "Place, Ideological Mobility and Youth Negotiations of Gender Identities in Urban Botswana." *Gender, Place, and Culture*. 17(2): 211-229.

Keiner, M. et al. eds. (2004). "Gaborone: An Emerging Urban Oasis (Chapter 3)." In: *From Understanding to Action: Sustainable Urban Development in Medium Sized Cities in Africa and Latin America*. Springer.

### **Week Two:**

#### Township Issues for Youth: Considering the Moral Foundation of Vulnerable Youth

Matemba, Yonah. (2010). "Continuity and Change in the Development of Moral Education in Botswana." *Journal of Moral Education*. 39(3): 329-343.

Van Bingsbergen, William. "Making Sense of Urban Space in Francistown, Botswana." In P.J. M. Mas. ed. *Urban Symbolism*. Leiden: Brill, Studies in Human Societies, vol 8, pp. 184-228.

#### Additional Readings

Swartz, Sharlene. (2009). *The Moral Ecology of South Africa's Township Youth*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

### **Week Four**

#### Rural Life in Botswana as Seen by a Young Botswana Writer

Head, Bessie. (1981). *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

#### Additional Readings

Head, Bessie. (2008). *The Collector of Treasures and Other Botswana Village Tales*. New York, NY: Longman.

Sample, Maxine. ed. (2003). *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Tumedi, Mary and M. Seatholo, M. Lederer. (2007). *Writing Bessie Head in Botswana, An Anthology of Remembrance and Criticism*. Gaborone, Pentagon Publishers.

**Week Five:****Student Movements: Activist and Radical Responses**

Durham, Deborah, "Disappearing Youth: Youth as a Social Shifter in Botswana." *American Ethnologist*. 31 (4): 589-605.

Galeitse, Thero. "National Students Union to be Revived," *The Botswana Gazette*. Wed, April 13, 2011

Selolwane. Onalemna. "The Future of Democracy in Botswana: The Role of Youth" <http://www.ascleiden.nl/pdf/conference24042003-selolwane.pdf>

Summers, Dexter. <http://usuabroad-dexter.blogspot.com/2011/03/look-into-youth-culture.html>

**Week Six:****The Significance of African Language Development**

Batibo, Herman. (2005). *Language Decline and Death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

**Week Seven:****Language Issues in Botswana**

Adeyemi, Deborah. (2008). "Bilingual Education: Meeting the Challenges of Diversity in Botswana." *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 17 (1): 20-33.

Monaka, A. and Mutula, S. M. (2010). "An Inclusive Linguistic Framework for Botswana: Reconciling the State and Perceived Marginalized Communities." *Journal of Information, Information Technology, and Organization*. Vol 5. 51-65.

Molosiwa, Annah. "Language and Literacy Issues in Botswana." Working Paper #4, Cultural Practices of Literacy Study, Michigan State University. Online.

Nyati-Ramahobo, Lydia. (2000). "The Language Situation in Botswana." *Current Issues in Language Planning*. 1 (2): 243-300.

**Week Eight: Break****Week Nine:****The Role of Media in Youth Education**

Zaffiro, James. (1993). "Mass media, Politics and Society in Botswana: 1990s and Beyond." *Africa Today*, 40(1): 7-19.

### Additional Readings

Castells, Manuel. Ed. (2004). *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ferguson, James. (2006). *Global Shadows*. Duke University Press.

### **Week Ten:**

#### Botswana Culture: Music, Art, and Dance

Brennan, Geraldine. (2006). "Art Education and the Visual Arts in Botswana." *Journal of Art and Design Education*. 25(3): 319-328.

Botswana Art and Music Websites

<http://www.knowbotswana.com/botswana-music.html>

<http://www.maitisong.org/>

<http://www.bsa.org.bw/html/>

### **Week Eleven:**

#### Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Production

Burke, Charlanne. (2000). "They Cut Segametsi into Parts: Ritual Murder, Youth, and the Politics of Knowledge in Botswana." *Anthropological Quarterly*. 73(4): 204-214.

Onyancha, Omowoyo Boisire and Jan Maluleka (2011). "Knowledge Production through Collaborative Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: How Much Do Countries Contribute to each Other's Knowledge Output and Citation Impact?" *Scientometrics*. 87(2): 315-336.

### Additional Readings

Semali, Ladislaus and Joe Kincheloe, ed. (1999). *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwa. (2005). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York, NY: Zed Books.

### **Week Twelve:**

#### The Global Challenge of Educating Immigrant Youth in Botswana

Campell, EK. "Reflections on Illegal Immigration in Botswana and South Africa." <http://www.iwvg.org/ar/popline/reflections-illegal-immigration-botswana-and-south-africa>

Crush, Jonathan. Series Editor "Changing Attitudes to Immigration and Refugee Policy in Botswana."  
<http://www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/policyseries/policy28.htm>

Morapedi, Wazha G. (2007). "Post-Liberation Xenophobia in Southern Africa: The Case of Influx of Undocumented Zimbabwean Immigrants into Botswana, c. 1995-2004." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25(2): 229-250.

Nkala, Silas. "Botswana Approaches Zim over Border Jumpers." *NewsDay*. Bulawayo, ZW, March 08, 2011 <http://www.newsday.co.zw>

*Zimbabwe Online Press*. "Botswana Still Battling Soaring Numbers of Illegal Immigrants." February 7, 2010.

#### Additional Readings

Campbell, Eugene. (2007). "Brain Drain Potential in Botswana."  
*International Migration*. 45(5): 115-145.

Mehretu, Julie.(2007). *Julie Mehretu*. New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications.

#### **Week Thirteen:**

Final Paper, Oral Presentations

#### **Week Fourteen:**

Encountering the Botswana School System: Visits to Schools

Abosi C. Okechukwu. and Itah Kandjii-Murangi, eds. (1995). *Education in Botswana: A Reading Text*. Gabarone, BW: Macmillan Botswana Publishing.

#### **Week Fifteen:**

Religious Education in Botswana

Davies, Geraint. (2007). "Religious Education in Botswana." *British Journal of Religious Education*. 29(2): 141-156.

Raditonaneng, Wapu. (2011). "Problems Encountered in the Teaching of Religious Education: A Case Study in Botswana." *Western Journal of Black Studies*. 35(1):22-38.