Extended Study to South Africa

ALST 380: Movements for Social Justice in South Africa

- On-campus class followed by three weeks in South Africa
- Class begins following spring break, and meets for 2.5 hours per week

Directors: Mary Moran (ANTH) and Mark Stern (EDUC)

On-campus course: ALST 380: Social Movements in South Africa

Tentative travel dates: May 20-June 9, 2015

Course credit: 1 credit

Prerequisite: CORE 190 or instructors’ permission

Application deadline: October 27, 2014

Applications available from: www.colgate.edu/off-campus-study/extended-study

INFORMATION SESSIONS: Tues. October 21, 7-8 pm, and Thurs. October 23, 5-6 pm, 111 Alumni Hall.

Overview

Well known for its history of apartheid, South Africa has had a tumultuous legacy of struggle as more and more categories of people have demanded their rights as citizens. Labor unions, grassroots movements for access to public health and education, community development groups, and organizations devoted to environmental justice, women’s rights, civil rights, and democratization are among the numerous movements that have united South Africans in collective action.

The extended study will take us to two major cities, Durban and Cape Town, and will examine civil society struggles and the impact of social movements in each context. Located on the Indian Ocean coast, Durban is a major sea port with the largest population of South Africans of South Asian descent. It is the site of important mobilizations by sugar plantation workers, longshoremen, and currently, civil society movements for environmental justice and healthcare access. Cape Town is the graceful “Mother City” at the tip of the African continent, the first European settlement in southern Africa, and the place where Dutch settlers, indigenous Koi-San hunter-gatherers, and expanding Bantu-speaking pastoralists all encountered each other in the 17th century. Today, the descendants of indigenous people are using archaeologically significant

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rock art sites as the basis of their claims for recognition, and the legacy of apartheid-era population displacements is painfully visible in the layout of the city. In each location, we will work with local academics to visit historical and contemporary sites of significance to today’s social movements. These cities are quite different with regard to demographics, landscapes, and histories; and the constant analytical comparison between different regions of the same country will be a theme of our travels.

**Instruction and Course Work**

This course considers social movements in the specific context of South Africa, a country which has been transformed by and continues to experience large-scale civil society mobilizations. South Africa’s unusual heritage of settler colonialism, enforced racial segregation, and explosive economic growth fueled by resources like gold and diamonds combine to make the country a perfect setting in which to investigate the efforts of diverse groups of citizens to achieve a more just and equitable society.

We will meet for six weeks on campus, once a week in two and a half hour sessions, followed by three weeks of travel in South Africa. The course will help students develop a theoretical framework for understanding these dynamics followed by an opportunity to observe the historical settings and contemporary contexts for such movements. During the on-campus portion of the course, students will conduct extensive library research on a particular social movement of their choice. While on the three week extended study trip, students will make presentations to their peers about how the scholarly literature they have consulted informs their observations and interpretations of the sites and movement activists we will be visiting. As a final project, each student will produce a 5 to 8 page proposal for future research on their topic. While not all of these proposals will result in real continuing projects, it is our hope that some will be submitted for funded summer research through Colgate’s academic divisions and others will form the basis for senior thesis work, independent study, or graduate fellowship applications in future years.