**SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT**

Lecturer and convenor: Andrew Nash

Associate Professor: Political Studies

Telephone: 021-650-5593

Email: [Andrew.Nash@uct.ac.za](mailto:Andrew.Nash@uct.ac.za)

**OpenUCT Introduction:**

This collection of materials is taken from a semester long course within the UCT Political Studies programme. Students on the course would attend around 4 hour-long lectures and 1 tutorial per week. The materials presented here are selected lecture notes and tutorial plans. Not all lectures in the series have notes; some consisted of discussion sessions. This outline details the readings students would be expected to study prior to attending these lectures. Whilst the actual lectures (and debates) can not be provided, this collection should provide an introduction to the themes of the course and provide the kinds of questions that aid the understanding of political thought in South Africa.

Arguably this collection is best studied in groups, to enable discussion of the themes; the tutorial exercises are designed for this purpose.

**Overview**

This course provides a survey of the main developments in South African political thought since the beginning of the twentieth century. A twelve-week course cannot cover every significant development in South African political thought in this period; but this course is intended to give students an understanding of the main political traditions in modern South Africa, and how they have interacted and developed.

At the same time, the material is organized around themes that are not specific to any one political or ideological tradition, but play a role in defining the politics of specific periods. The three main organizing themes are described briefly in the following section of this outline.

Finally, the course is intended to provide a sense of the overall trajectory of political ideas in modern South Africa, its distinctive character and its significance for understanding and assessing contemporary developments. The essays for the course require students to discuss specific questions in such a way as to clarify that larger historical trajectory.

**Structure**

The course is divided into four parts. Each part occupies three weeks of lectures. Each part focuses on a relatively brief period in which thinkers from different political camps responded to common problems.

Part One deals with ways in which the question of a unified South African state was put on the agenda in response to the discovery of minerals in South Africa, and especially the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886. It contrasts the visions of a future South Africa made explicit by Rhodes and Schreiner and the alternative represented by the Boer Republics, soon to be destroyed by British military intervention.

Part Two examines the emergence of a new layer of urban intellectuals in the aftermath of the South African war of 1899-1902 and unification in 1910. From a range of perspectives they sought to resist a historical model imposed by British imperial power. Even the nationalism of that time had to frame their projects in world-historical terms, although they did not always provide a clear or accurate account of the course of world history.

Part Three deals with responses to decolonization in South African political thought from the 1940s to the 1960s. The Atlantic Charter of 1941 held out the prospect of a world without colonialism, and Africans in South Africa were quick to set out their claims in such a world. Lembede and the ANC Youth League went further, arguing for Africanism that drew on Western civilization without treating it as a measure of African achievement. Verwoerd's apartheid policies were intended as a way of circumventing the pressures for African self-government. The actual results of decolonization were different from what any camp supposed at the time.

Part Four deals with the liberation struggle and its aims, assumptions and dominant context. We begin with the radicalism of the 1970s, which found organizational form outside of the Congress tradition in the independent labour movement and the Black Consciousness movement. We examine the aftermath of the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the formation of mass movements within South Africa. And we conclude with a discussion of South African politics after the moment of Mandela.

For further details, see the programme of lectures and readings included below.

**Lectures**

Brief outlines of lectures, or outlines for discussion covering only part of the lecture, are provided here. These are not intended to take the place of lectures, but to provide a reminder of the main points and a framework for your own reading of the texts. Outlines will be provided for as many of the lectures as possible, but probably not for all of them.

The course is not designed in such a way that you can complete it successfully without attending lectures. That is to say, studying the contents of the readings, without knowing how to analyse these readings, will not enable you to meet the requirements of the course.

**Tutorials**

Tutorials for the course focus on specific questions about a short extract, usually from the readings for that week, intended to give students practice in reading and interpreting texts and opportunity to exchange and test ideas about their significance. Tutorials are not held in every week of the course.

**Essay Assignments**

The first essay assignment requires you to *compare and contrast the differing visions articulated around 1895 for South Africa’s future by Cecil John Rhodes and by Olive Schreiner*. The essay should draw on source material provided in the first course reader. You are not required to make use of other material, but may do so if you wish.

You are encouraged to make use of the contrast between their views to reflect on its larger significance for South African history. For example, you could reflect on the question of why Olive Schreiner, who was the first to argue publicly for a non-racial political order in South Africa, admired Paul Kruger, who defended racial inequality in the Transvaal Republic, while Rhodes, who shared Kruger’s commitment to white supremacy, saw him as an enemy.

The essay should not be longer than 2000 words, and must be properly referenced. You can reference in any recognized style, but are encouraged to use Chicago humanities style (footnotes or endnotes), which will be required for the second essay.

The second essay assignment requires you to discuss *the impact of decolonization on South African political thought*, roughly from the Atlantic Charter of 1941 to the development of apartheid under Verwoerd. The essay should focus on at least one political thinker who responded to decolonization, or its prospect. The essay should draw on material from the course readers, and especially course reader three. Further material will be provided on the course website, and you are encouraged to make use of library and other sources.

The essay should not be longer than 3,000 words, excluding references. It should be properly referenced, using the Chicago humanities style (footnotes or endnotes).

**Programme of Lectures, Readings, Tutorials and Hand-ins**

Students are encouraged to do the reading that will form the focus of each lecture. In order to assist students who cannot do all the reading in a specific week, I have selected one reading for each week of the course, marked below with an asterisk (\*), which you should make sure that you read.

***Part One: Visions of a Unified South Africa, circa 1895 to 1902: Rhodes, Schreiner, Kruger and the Boer Republics***

**Week 1: Rhodes and the South African State**

*Lecture 1: Course outline*

*Lecture 2: Rhodes’ role in South African history*

Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002), introductory chapter on “The Empathic Leadership of Cecil J. Rhodes,” pp. xxv–xxxvii.

*Lecture 3: Reshaping the racial order in South Africa*

\*Rotberg, *The Founder*, chapter 17: “The Second Premiership,” pp. 450–87.

*Lecture 4: Rhodes and Mandela: Continuity and difference*

Adekeye Adebajo, *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010), chapter 10: “Mandela and Rhodes: A Monstrous Marriage,” pp. 215–32.

**Week 2: Schreiner’s Critique of Monopoly Capitalism**

*Lecture 5: Schreiner’s critique of Rhodes*

\*Olive Schreiner and S.C. Cronwright Schreiner, *The Political Situation* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1896), pp. 2-20.

William Plomer, *Cecil Rhodes* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1984), pp. 119–24.

*Lecture 6: Schreiner’s alternative*

Schreiner and Schreiner, *The Political Situation*, pp. 20-35

*Lecture 7: Schreiner’s Mediterraneanism*

Olive Schreiner, *Closer Union* (Cape Town: Constitutional Reform Association, n.d.), pp. 1–5, 20–36.

*Lecture 8: Learning skills: What is an essay?*

**Week 3: 29 July–2 August: The Destruction of the Boer Republics**

*Lecture 9: Boer Republicanism*

Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), extract from chapter 6: “Settling in the Deep Interior,” pp. 179–89.

\*Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, extract from chapter 8: “The Crucible of War,” pp. 228–43.

*Lecture 10: The republican critique of capitalism*

F. W. Reitz, *A Century of Wrong* (London: Review of Reviews, 1899), pp. 1–3, 36–47, 89–98.

*Lecture 11: The Debates at Vereeniging in 1902*

\*J. D. Kestell and D. E. van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations between Boer and Briton in South Africa* (London: Richard Clay & Sons, 1912), pp. 164–70, 188–99.

John Scoble and H.R. Abercrombie, *The Rise and Fall of Krugerism: A Personal Record of Forty Years in South Africa* (London: William Heinemann, 1900), chapter 17: “The End of Krugerism,” pp. 247–55.

*Lecture 12: Learning skills: Writing an essay in history of political thought*

***Part Two: New Intellectuals within and against Empire, c. 1908 to 1913: M.K. Gandhi, Sol Plaatje, Tobie Muller***

**Week 4: Gandhi’s South African Years**

*Lecture 13: Gandhi and the South African War*

\*M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, in Shriman Narayan, ed., *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 3 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928), chapter 9: “The Boer War,” pp. 92–108.

*Lecture 14: Gandhi’s Satyagraha*

M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, in Shriman Narayan, ed., *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 3 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928), chapter 11: “The Reward of Gentleness—The Black Act,” chapter 12: “The Advent of Satyagraha,” chapter 13: “Satyagraha vs. Passive Resistance,” pp. 131–58.

Andrew Nash, "Gandhi in South Africa: An Interpretation," unpublished seminar paper, 2004.

*Lecture 15: Interpreting Gandhi*

Gandhi**–**Nehru letters, in M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. pp. 149**–**56.

Akeel Bilgrami, “Gandhi’s religion and its relation to politics,” in Judith M. Brown and Anthony Parel, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 93-116.

*Lecture 16: Learning skills: What are lectures for and what can you learn from them?*

**Week 5: Sol Plaatje and the Global Question of Race**

*Lecture 17: The beginnings of the ANC*

Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964*, vol. 1: *Protest and Hope, 1882–1934* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), documents on the establishment of the ANC and documents making appeals abroad, pp. 68–75, 125–42.

*Lecture 18: Sol Plaatje’s travels*

Brian Willan, ed., Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), pp. 241-83.

*Lecture 19: Socialism and African nationalism in South Africa*

International Socialist League, “International Socialism and the Native—No Labour Movement without the Black Proletariat” (1917), in *South African Communists Speak: Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, 1915-1980* (London: Inkululeko Publications, 1981), pp. 30-32.

*Lecture 20: Learning skills:*

**Week 6: Tobie Muller and Afrikaner Nationalism**

*Lecture 21: Afrikaner Nationalism as Ideology of Modernization?*

Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), extract from chapter 11: "To Stop Being *Agterryers*: The Assertion of a New Afrikaner Identity," pp. 354–79.

*Lecture 22: Tobie Muller's "Confession of Faith"*

\*Tobie Muller, "Confession of Faith of a Nationalist," translated from *Geloofsbelydenis van 'n Nasionalis*, in B. B. Keet and Gordon Tomlinson, *Tobie Muller: 'n Inspirasie vir Jong Suid-Afrika* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1925), pp. 126–53.

*Lecture 23:*

*Lecture 24: Learning skills: Referencing*

***Part Three: Who Speaks for Black People in the Cities? Kotane, Lembede, Mandela, c. 1943 to 1959***

**Week 7: ANC’s African Claims; Moses Kotane; Dora Taylor**

*Lecture 25: The Atlantic Charter, Decolonization and South Africa*

“The Atlantic Charter,” in W. Arnold-Foster, *Charters of the Peace* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1944), p. 136.

\*African National Congress, "African Claims in South Africa" (1941), in T. Karis and G. M. Carter, ed., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964*, vol. 2: *Hope and Challenge, 1935–52* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), pp. 209–23.

*Lecture 26: Moses Kotane, Dora Taylor and national culture*

Moses Kotane, “Letter from Cradock” (1934), in *South African Communists Speak*, pp. 120-22.

Dora Taylor, “Africans Speak” and “Africans Speak II”, in *English in Africa* 29:2 (October 2002), pp. 66-75.

*Lecture 27: The Limits of Liberal Reformism*

\*Report of Interview by Some Native Representative Council Members with Prime Minister Jan Smuts, May 1947,” in T. Karis and G. M. Carter, ed., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964*, vol. 2: *Hope and Challenge, 1935–52* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), pp. 233–57.

*Lecture 28: Learning skills; General discussion*

**Week 8: Anton Lembede and the ANC Youth League**

*Lecture 29: The Political Education of Anton Lembede*

A.M. Lembede, *The Concept of God as expounded by and as it emerges from the philosophers from Descartes to the present day* (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1945), extracts.

Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), chapter 3: "Lembede and the ANC Youth League, 1943–49."

*Lecture 30: The Formation of the ANC Youth League*

\*Provisional Committee of the Congress Youth League, “Congress Youth League Manifesto (1944),” in Anton Lembede, *Freedom in Our Lifetime: The Collected Writings of Anton Muziwahke Lembede*, ed. Robert R. Edgar and Luyanda ka Msumza (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996), pp. 58–69.

*Lecture 31: Africanism and the working class*.

A.M. Lembede, “Some Basic Principles of African Nationalism,” in *Freedom in Our Lifetime*, pp. 85–86.

“The Impending Strike of African Miners: A statement by the African Miineworkers Union,” in Allison Drew, ed., *South Africa’s Radical Tradition: A Documentary History*, vol. 1: 1907–1950 (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), pp. 369–72.

*Lecture 32: Learning skills: Choosing an essay title; writing a first paragraph*

**Week 9: Verwoerd’s Apartheid and Mandela’s Critique**

*Lecture 33: Verwoerd on Apartheid as Decolonization*

“Address by Harold Macmillan to Members of both Houses of Parliament of the Union of South Africa, Cape Town, 3 February 1960,” in Macmillan, *Pointing the Way, 1959–1961* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 473–87.

H. F. Verwoerd, “Speech of Thanks Addressed to Mr. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, on February 3, 1960,” in A. N. Pelzer, *Verwoerd Speaks: Speeches 1948–1966* (Johannesburg: APB Publishers, 1966), pp. 336–39.

*Lecture 34: Mandela’s Critique*

\*Nelson Mandela, “Verwoerd’s Tribalism” (1959), in Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis, Jr., ed., *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 60–68.

*Lecture 35: The Rise of Mandela*

I.B. Tabata, *Letter to Mandela on the Problem of Organisational Unity in South Africa, June 1948* (Salt River: APDUSA, 1997), pp. 4-10.

Nelson Mandela, “I Am Prepared to Die,” in Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis, Jr., ed., *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 115–33.

Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1999), chapter 12: “Violence,” pp. 140–59.

*Lecture 36: Learning skills: Revising from first draft to final draft*

***Part Four: What Kind of Liberation? Biko, Turner, Mandela in Prison, c. 1969 to 1979***

**Week 10: Biko and Black Consciousness; Turner and NUSAS**

*Lecture 37: The Emergence of Black Consciousness*

Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004), pp. 3–20.

*Lecture 38: Black Consciousness as Philosophy and Strategy*

\*Biko, *I Write What I Like*, chapter 14: "Black Consciousness and the Quest for True Humanity," and chapter 15: "What is Black Consciousness?" pp. 96–134.

*Lecture 39: Richard Turner and student radicalism*

Richard Turner, “Black Consciousness and White Liberals,” *Reality* 4: 2 (July 1972), pp. 20–22.

Richard Turner, *The Eye of the Needle: Towards Participatory Democracy in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978), chapter 1: “The Necessity of Utopian Thinking,” and chapter 2: "Human Models: Christianity and Capitalism," pp. 1–22.

*Lecture 40: Learning skills: Writing as activism*

**Week 11: Mandela’s Critique of BC and the Contest for Hegemony within the Liberation Movement**

*Lecture 41: Mandela’s Critique of Black Consciousness*

Nelson Mandela, “Whither the Black Consciousness Movement? An Assessment,” in Mac Maharaj, ed., Reflections in Prison (Cape Town, Zebra, 2001), pp. 21–64.

*Lecture 42: After Soweto*

Archie Mafeje, “Soweto and Its Aftermath,” *Review of African Political Economy* 5: 11 (January 1978), pp. 17–30.

Ruth First, “After Soweto: A Response,” *Review of African Political Economy* 5: 11 (January 1978), pp. 93–100.

*Lecture 43: Towards a Negotiated Settlement*

Nomavenda Mathiane, “The Deadly Duel of the Wararas and the Zims-Zims,” in Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson, ed., *All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (Cape Town: Ford Foundation and David Philip, 1991), pp. 279–82.

“ANC Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa, 1988,” in Lodge and Nasson, ed., *All, Here and Now*, pp. 352–56.

*Lecture 44: Learning skills: Exam preparation*

**Week 12: Debates on Race and Class since 1969**

*Lecture 45: ANC and SACP on national liberation and socialism*

ANC, "Strategy and Tactics," in Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart, ed., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882*–*1964*, volume 5: *Nadir and Resurgence, 1964–1979* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1997), pp. 387–93.

*Lecture 46: The independent labour movement and FOSATU*

Alec Erwin, “Is Economic Growth Beneficial to Workers?,” *South African Labour Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 2 (April 1974), pp. 7–9.

Joe Foster, “The Workers’ Struggle—Where does FOSATU Stand?” *South African Labour Bulletin* 7:8 (July 1982), pp. 67-86.

*Lecture 47: Race, class and the negotiated settlement of 1990-94*

Andrew Nash, “Mandela’s Democracy,” in Sean Jacobs and Richard Calland, ed., *Thabo Mbeki’s World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press / London: Zed Books, 2002), pp. 243–55.

\*Moeletsi Mbeki, "Concepts of Transformation and the Social Structure of South Africa," in in Gill Marcus, Xolela Mangcu, Khehla Shubane and Adrian Hadland, ed., *Visions of Black Economic Empowerment* (Auckland Park: Jacana, 2007), pp. 216–25.

*Lecture 48: Learning skills: General discussion*

AN, 15/7/2013