This seminar explores the ways in which people on the African continent have used masks, animated in masquerade performances, to respond to and shape the changing social, political, economic, and religious forces around them. Students will learn (1) how various peoples in West Africa, in particular, have performed masquerades to construct the past and to shape the present; (2) how nineteenth- and twentieth-century explorers and ethnographers have described masks and masquerades; (3) how masquerades influence gender attitudes and social behavior; and (4) how masquerade performances embody competing, overlapping, and multi-vocal agendas.

The current exhibition at the Carleton Gould Library, *Masquerading Politics: Gender, Power, and Performance in Southwestern Nigeria*, uses images and video of masquerades and of interviews featuring both practitioners and scholars to highlight the similarities and the differences in the involvement of men and women in the practice and in the organizations that govern masquerades among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. For their final projects, students will replace its content by designing their own exhibit that focuses on one of the themes explored in the course. This multimedia exhibition complements the Visualities and Global Engagement Initiatives.

This advanced African history seminar uses in-depth discussions of masquerades from several cultures in West Africa. It offers an overview of the development of masquerades during the precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods in order to assess changes in the functions and meanings of masquerade practices and the organizations that govern them. In addition to course readings, students will examine documentary films. Assignments -- such as the historiography and primary source papers and the video and photographic exhibition project -- provide opportunities for students to think critically about the power of representation. Students will cultivate their ability to create, interpret, and employ visual images and media.

**COURSE READING**

See course schedule below.

**GRADING**

*Class Participation*  20%

For each class, you are required to read all assigned materials and come to class prepared to participate actively in all discussions of the readings. You should also bring copy of the readings to class along with your notes. The expectation is that you will actively participate in discussions by referencing texts, making connections with other evidence, and articulating questions and hypotheses. Let me emphasize that simply showing up for class is not enough; it is equally important for you to read all of the materials; reflect on them; and speak in all class discussions and engage in all class activities. During each class meeting, you must be prepared to share your ideas, insights, and questions about the reading material. You are also responsible for making a Moodle Forum posting by 8 p.m. the night before your syllabus indicates that a Forum is due. Please right in complete grammatically correct sentences. Comprehension, critical reflection, and creative thinking are critical for you to be able to perform at an above average (B) or excellent (A) in all areas of evaluation.
**Pop Quizzes** 10%

Unannounced pop quizzes will occur randomly during class. If you arrive to class after a quiz has begun and, therefore, missed a question, the questions missed will not be repeated. If you miss a quiz, you will not have the opportunity to retake it.

**Historiography Assignment** 20%

Students will write two historiography essays. You will submit a shorter 3-page version during week 4, and a 6-page version during week 6. This assignment offers an opportunity to both summarize and critically reflect upon a collection of essays from various scholars about a particular topic. You will summarize the arguments, methods, and conclusions of the work under review and articulate their implications for scholars and beyond.

**Primary Source Assignment** 20%

This assignment offers students the opportunity to examine a primary source, a written by a 19th century missionary in a Yoruba town. This assignment offers students the opportunity to examine a primary source, and contextualize it by making an argument about what it reveals about the author and the context in which he or she produced this source. You also must identify and evaluate the arguments that the writer is makes as well as his underlying assumptions. Highlight a particularly interesting, puzzling, controversial, or illuminating element this source, and write a 3-page paper. Ultimately, his assignment challenges you to develop your capacity for intellectual creativity and independence by encouraging you to apply the following skills: differentiate, categorize, formulate, evaluate, devise, and appraise.

**Final Project** 30%

For this project, you will work in groups of three to put together a sequel (or 2.0 version) exhibition to the current show (1.0). Your group or team literally will be developing a video and photographs to replace the material that is currently in the exhibition. There are two options in terms of the topic. For those who choose option one, your group will design a section of the exhibit that focuses on one of the following masquerades (Oya, Ajofoyinbo, Ege, and Owolafe). Drawing from an archive of interviews and performances available in the Idea Lab, your library exhibit should address the history, meaning, and function of a particular masquerade for the family that honors its ancestors and promotes its status in the community through performances. Your principal challenge is to balance how this family represents itself through its masquerade performances and how you feel this family’s history should be presented through this masquerade exhibit. For those of you choose option two, your group will design a section of the exhibit that focuses on the issue of women’s involvement of masquerade performances, highlighting a group of women chiefs of the masquerade society that organizes performances. Your task is to explore the different ways in which these women’s roles are discussed and juxtapose these perceptions with how the women represent themselves.

This syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of the professor.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

- If you have questions or concerns, feel free to speak with me about them. You may attend my office hours, call me at the office, or e-mail me, but by all means, let me know about any idea or suggestion that will improve your learning experience in this course.
- I expect EVERY student to do well. I would LOVE for each student to receive an “A” in this course!! However, it is the student’s responsibility to EARN it. The professor does not give grades; student earns his or her grade.
- If ANY student receives a grade below a C on ANY assignment, he or she MUST see me during my office hours during the following week!!
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1  INTRODUCTION: COURSE DESIGN

September 12, Day 1

*Course Design

*View “Masquerades in Africa” Library Exhibition

September 14, Day 2


September 16, Day 3

*MOODLE FORUM RESPONSE #1: What is a masquerade? What are its varied meanings and functions? Why can masks/masquerades be viewed as a cultural system?


Supplemental reading:


WEEK 2  MASQUERADE AS ART, PRACTICE, AND SOCIETY
(IGBO PEOPLE, NIGERIA)

September 19, Day 4


September 21, Day 5


September 23, Day 6

*MOODLE FORUM RESPONSE #2: What is a masquerade’s varied meanings and functions among the Igbo people of Nigeria? What are the significance of masquerades for the social, political, economic, and ritual lives of Igbo people? How have masquerades changed over time?


WEEK 3  METHODS AND SOURCES IN THE STUDY OF MASQUERADES
Masquerades in Africa Seminar

Masks - historical artifacts

Masquerades - produce historical narratives and shape historical events

Assessing the value of earliest written sources on masks/masquerades

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**September 26, Day 7**  
Idoma people, Nigeria


**September 28, Day 8**


**September 30, Day 9**

*W/ Paula Lackie, @240pm-3pm*


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**WEEK 4  MISSIONARIES (PRECOLONIAL ERA)**

Missionary endeavors in West Africa, outlook, project, politics, and perspectives on African art and ritual practices

**October 3, Day 10**

*3-PAGE HISTORIOGRAPHY PAPER DUE*


**October 5, Day 11**

* BRING IN PHYSICAL PRINT OUT TO CLASS  
* BRING TRANSCRIPTION TO CLASS

Peel’s use of James White journals and letters


**October 7, Day 12,**

*MOODLE FORUM RESPONSE #3: What were the aims and objectives of missionaries? What was the context in which they both evangelized, and encountered and observed masquerades and other ritual practices? What aspects of masquerades and other ritual practices and societies were they able to observe?*


[LIBRARY VISIT - compare art history, anthro, museum prof. aware of how portraying in an ethnical manner]
WEEK 5      COLONIAL ERA AND MAMMY WATER (IGBO, NIGERIA)

Missionary documents homework, different small groups will transcribe different sources/accounts, end of 2nd

October 10, Day 13

*PRIMARY SOURCE PAPER


October 12, Day 14


October 14, Day 15

• Discuss the documentary film, Mammy Water: In Search of the Water Spirits in Nigeria. Sabine Jell-Bahlsen 60 min, 1989.


WEEK 6      GELEDE (YORUBA, NIGERIA)

October 17, Mid-term break, No Classes

October 19, Day 16


Chapter 7 - A Historical and Thematic Overview, 221-246


October 21, Day 17  
*PEPS WORKSHOP # 1  
*6-PAGE HISTORIOGRAPHY PAPER  
WEEK 7  
EGUNGUN (YORUBA)  

October 24, Day 18  

October 26, Day 19  

October 28, Day 20  

*PEPS WORKSHOP # 2  
WEEK 8  

October 31, Day 21  
Class meets @IdeaLab  

MOODLE FORUM #4: POST PHOTOS AND VIDEO CLIPS  

November 2, Day 22  
Class meets @IdeaLab  

MOODLE FORUM #4: COMMENTS ON PHOTOS AND VIDEOS  

November 4, Day 23  
Class meets @IdeaLab  

*CONFIRMATION OF FINAL PHOTOS AND VIDEO CLIPS  
WEEK 9  

November 7, Day 24  
REVIEW  

November 9, Day 25  
Class meets @IdeaLab  

FINAL ESSAY DRAFT DUE  

November 11, Day 26  
Class meets @IdeaLab
• PEPS WORKSHOP # 3

FINAL VIDEO EDITING COMPLETE

WEEK 10

November 14, Day 27    Class meets @IdeaLab

FINAL PRESENTATION

November 16, Day 28

FINAL ESSAY DUE