**SOUTH AFRICA: CONTESTED TRANSITIONS**

Revised Schedule of Seminar Sessions

(revised dates in italics)

(readings for each session are listed in the course syllabus)

**Introduction: Contested Transitions in South Africa (10 January)**

Our principal concerns in this initial session are to introduce the course content and organize the seminar, to explore the interests of course participants, and to begin to address general issues of approach and method in the study of contemporary South Africa.

**South African History: An Overview (24 January)**

What are the major roots of the contemporary transitions in South Africa? How can we use our knowledge of the past, itself contested, to understand the interactions and conflicts of the present? And how does the present inform and revise what we (think we) know of the past? To address those questions, we must explore both history and historiography—*who* has written the history of South Africa? *Whose* history has been written? *what* have been the principal tools for writing that history and *what* are the consequences of using those tools? *who* tells the story differently?

**Liberation Struggles: From Generations of Resistance to Negotiations (31 January)**

The struggle against apartheid in the late 20th century had deep roots. Resistance to white rule in South Africa has taken many forms, including direct armed confrontation, infiltration and subversion, collaboration, negotiation, boycott, individual protest, mass demonstrations, assertion of local culture and experience, nationalism of several sorts and forms, and more. Our first task in this session is to understand the history of resistance in South Africa—*ideas*, *contexts*, *forms*, *practices*, and *outcomes*. How has each generation sometimes built on, sometimes ignored, and sometimes rejected earlier approaches? We will consider as well the path to majority rule, which traversed both armed struggle and extended negotiations. *Who* were the negotiators? *For whom* did they speak? *On whose* support could they rely? *What* made a negotiated transition possible?

**The Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Historical Construction and Reconstruction (7 February)**

With its long history of racial discrimination and systematic exploitation and repression, what was to be the foundation for constructing the new South Africa. Political participation, universal suffrage, and a majority government were and are essential. But what might promote unity in this very divided society? The demand to convict and imprison apartheid’s leaders and administrators was loud and strong. But the new South African government opted for reconciliation. A very visible and very prestigious Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created to expose what had happened and for those who cooperated, including assassins and torturers, to grant amnesty. Political compromise? popular theater? an effort to shape attitudes, morals, and ethics?—the TRC remains enigmatic. *Whose* interests were served? *With what* consequences?

**Constructing the New South Africa: Mass Democracy and the Enrenchment of Privilege (10 February [Friday: 6:30–8:30 pm])**

Today we focus on the first of the series of overlapping transitions that we will consider. A major challenge of this era, both before and after the 1994 election, is to write the rules for what has been termed the New South Africa. What interests are to be given the strongest protection? Why? *How*? What is the appropriate division of authority and responsibility among national, provincial, and local leaders? *What* are the desirable, and reasonable, boundaries between public and private? between individual and community? *How* should the rules themselves be written and modified? *How* can broad participation be assured and minority interests recognized without entrenching privilege or impeding change?
Identities: Persistence and Transition (14 February)

Often, the history of South Africa is presented as the story of the creation and mobilization of identities, especially those of race and ethnicity. Yet for many South Africans, that assertion is itself a contentious claim. We are born Black, or Zulu, or Indian, or female, they insist. In this view, people cannot choose or easily modify who they are. Others, however, insist equally energetically that identities are socially constructed and can therefore be socially modified. Since we too face discrimination because of race and skin color, we too are black, asserted South African militants who were themselves legally categorized as Indian or Coloured. In this session we consider identities—asserted and assigned, inherited and created—as another of South Africa’s contested transitions.

From the RDP to GEAR: Old Socialism and New Capitalism (21 February)

For much of their history, the African National Congress and its allies, especially the unions and the Communist Party, linked opposition to apartheid to opposition to capitalism as an economic, social, and political system. Yet since assuming office, that coalition has embraced an understanding of South African development, indeed of the global political economy, that seems strikingly similar to the perspective of the World Bank, the United States, and other advocates of a capitalist world system. Have South African communism and socialism become little more than political slogans? Or have South Africans assumed global responsibility for defining communism and socialism in the post-Soviet Union era? Are South African workers and employers argumentative potential allies or implacable enemies?

HIV/AIDS: Controversies and Contentions (28 February)

Policy making is always a conflictual process. HIV/AIDS is no exception. To explore this contested arena, we will explore two different controversies that have emerged in recent years. The first revolves around critiques of the most widely accepted understanding of HIV and AIDS and their incidence in South Africa. A few critics and their supporters inside and outside South Africa reject both the reports on the extent of HIV and AIDS and the link between HIV and AIDS. The second controversy revolves around medical research on treating human immunodeficiency virus. What risks are appropriate? For whom? In what circumstances? For these two controversies, we will explore both the substance of the disagreements and their role in policy making.

From People’s Education to the National Qualifications Framework (7 March)

At critical moments education was clearly at the center of South African struggle. Just as Bantu Education was designed to allocate roles and constrain aspirations, so was People’s Education conceived as a strategy for mobilization against discrimination and oppression. Many people expected post-apartheid South Africa to have a radically different education system. Yet much of the debate today seems to assume that once they have been desegregated, schools will be organized and function pretty much as they have in the past. Here, then, is another of South Africa’s contested transitions. What are the competing agendas? Whose agendas are they? What are the current forms of struggle in this domain?

Reconstruction and Development: Policy Choices (14 March)

We conclude the Quarter by exploring the broad transformation agenda in contemporary South Africa, as it has evolved from the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the 1994 election to Growth, Employment, and Redistribution through the 1999 election. What has been the trajectory of these efforts to build the new South Africa on the legacy of apartheid? Why? With what consequences for the future?

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