

Boston University in Niger
NG 305: Class, Status, and Social Change
Teacher: Deborah Taylor

N.B. this course counts for the Africa and Middle East track, the Environment and Development track, or the Regional Politics and Cultural Anthropology track for IR majors (as per e-mail from Sheila Lynch, Nov 2007)

Course Overview

This course traces the causes of famine, extreme poverty, and underdevelopment in Niger, from the period of French colonization through independence to the present, exploring the social transformations that have taken place and the interwoven internal and external political, economic, and environmental factors that have led to Niger's status as the poorest country in the world.

Methodology

Lectures, selected readings, and class discussion.

Readings

Most readings are in English; some are translations from the French. All are cited in the course program the week they are assigned.

Grading Criteria

- 40% two essay-type questions on the lectures and readings
- 20% Book report on a book of the student's choice, the theme of which should be related to the themes dealt with in this course
- 30% Final exam
- 5% Attendance
- 5% Participation

Course Program (two classes per week; each class two hours long)

Week 1 Introduction and Overview – basic concepts

Readings

Chapter 1, "The Sahel and its People," pp 1-26, Niger – Personal Rule and Survival in the Sahel, R.B. Charlick, Westview Press, Boulder and San Francisco, 1991.

Week 1-2 Slave-Based Societies (Zarma-Songhay, Fulani, Tuareg and Hausa In Pre-Colonial Niger)

Readings

Chapter 1, "Social Structures," Wars and Societies, Idrissa Kimba, 1981.
Chapter 3, "Social Reproduction, Agricultural Production, and the Control of Surplus," Resource Management in a Stratified Fulani Community, PhD Dissertation, Wendy Wilson, Howard University, Washington, DC, 1984.
Chapter 4, "Some Aspects of the Evolution of the Tuaregs of the West in the Republic of Niger," Edmond Bernus, Etudes Nigériennes, 1982.

Chapter 5, "Hausaland c 184/800 to 1219/1804," The Development of Islam In West Africa, Mervyn Kiskett, 1984.

"Slavery and the Evolution of Nineteenth Century Damagaram (Zinder, Niger)" Roberta Ann Dunbar, Slavery in the Sudan, Igor Kopytoff, ed.

"The Tuareg of the Central Sudan – Gradations in Servility at the Desert Edge (Niger and Nigeria)," Stephen Baier and Paul E. Lovely, Slavery in the Sudan, Igor Kopytoff, ed.

Week 3 French Rule in Niger and the Resulting Social, Economic, and Political Changes

Readings

Chapter 2, "The Revolutionary Years, 1850-1908," and chapter 3, "The Decisive Years," History of Niger, Finn Fuglestad, 1983.

Chapter 3, "Colonial Achievements," and Societies, Idrissa Kimba, 1981

Week 4 Droughts and Famines in Niger During the Twentieth Century And their Social, Economic, and Political Consequences

Readings

Appendix 2, « Inventaires des Famines et Disettes: Sources Orales Recueillies Dans l'Ouest du Niger, » Une Histoire des Famines au Sahel, Boureima Alpha Gado, 1993.

Chapter 5, « The Events of 1968 and 1973, » Case Study 4: Pastoralism in the Sahel, Clive Agnew, 1983.

Selection of recent local newspaper articles on droughts and famines.

Week 5 Migration and Migrant Labor in Niger during the Twentieth Century and Their Social Consequences

Readings

Chapter 7, "Major Factors in the Historical Consolidation of Migration Patterns In the Dosso Area from the 1930's to the Present," Peasant Migrations and Rural Transformations in Niger: A Study of Incorporation within a West African Capitalist Regional Economy, c. 1875 to c. 1982, PhD Dissertation, Thomas Michael Painter, University of New York at Binghamton, 1985.

"Ivorian War Sends Regional Shockwaves," Ernest Harsh, Africa Recovery, Vol. 17, No. 2, July, 2003.

"Sahel: Caravan of Despair," Ali Bensaad, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 8, 2004.

Selection of recent local newspaper articles on droughts and famines.

Week 6 Independence Era and the Rise of New Social Classes: the Rich Merchants, the Political/Public Servants, and the Armed Forces

Readings

Chapter 3, "Colonial Maradi: An Administrative Capital Becomes Involved In Trade," and chapter 4, "Dynamism and Diversity: from Regional to Global Trade, and chapter 5, "The Social Content of Maradi's Evolution, The Alhazai Of Maradi – Traditional Hausa Merchants in a Changing Sahelian City,

Emmanuel Grégoire, 1992.

Chapter 6, "Towards a New Order, 1945-1960, History of Niger 1850-1960, Finn Fuglestad, 1983.

"The 1974 Coup d'Etat in Niger: Towards an Explanation," Richard Higgott and Finn Fuglestad, The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1975.

"L'Armée et le Pouvoir," Niger – Chroniques d'un Etat, Politique Africaine, No. 38, June, 1990.

Week 7 'Development' and Social Change in Independent Niger

Readings

Chapter 6, "Towards a New Order, 1945-1960, History of Niger 1850-1960, Finn Fuglestad, 1983.

"L'Aide Internationale," Pierre-Marie Decoudras, Niger – Chroniques d'un Etat, Politique Africaine, No. 38, June, 1990.

Week 8 The Social, Economic, and Political Causes of the Tuareg Rebellion And the Resulting Changes

Readings

Chapter 1, "Genèse d'un Conflit," Touaregs du Niger – Le Destin d'un Mythe, Emmanuelle Grégoire, 1999.

« Adieu Mano, » from the French-language magazine VSD.

Selection of newspaper articles on the rebellion.

Week 9 The Low Status of Women in Niger and their Adaptation to Impose Change

Readings

"Women in Francophone West Africa in the 1930s: Unraveling a Neglected Report," Ghislaine Lydon, Democracy and Development in Mali, James Bingen et al, eds., Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, 2000.

"Defining a Nation: Women's Legal Status and Development in Niger," Emily Bruno, Work for Distinction Essay submitted to Professor Edouard Bustin, Boston University, 2004.

Week 10 Islam in Niger as a Factor of Social Change – Moslem Fundamentalist And their Emergence as an Unofficial Opposition Dedicated to Health, Education, and Social Justice

Readings

"The 1982 Maitasine Uprisings in Nigeria: A Note," Raymond Hickey, African Affairs, 1984.

"Debating Muslims, Disputed Practices: Struggles for the Realization of an Alternative Moral Order in Niger," Adeline Masquelier, Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa/Critical Perspectives, John L and Jean Comaroff, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1999.

"A Discourse-Centered Approach Toward Understanding Muslim Identities in Zinder," Robert S. Glew, Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara, No. 14-15, 2000-2001, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.

Selection of recent local newspaper articles on fundamentalism in Niger

Terms and Conditions

Classes sometimes conflict with students' obligations for community placement or the programs of tours – necessary absences can be discussed beforehand so that a mutually satisfactory schedule can be arranged.

Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the 'Boston University Statement on Plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be 'expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean.'