

**From East African Colonialism to Postcolonial Europe  
CRES/FMST 135, Fall 2016**

**Course Format:** Research Seminar

**Grading Mode:** Graded

**Level:** Advanced Undergraduate, Graduate

**Prerequisites:** Student intends to write a senior or graduate thesis

**Notes:**

This advanced seminar uses cultural historiography to connect settler colonialism in East Africa with current formations of migration and diaspora in multi-ethnic Europe. Through students-as-teachers activities and guided research modules, this seminar will prepare advanced undergraduates and graduates students to engage in independent research in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. In terms of the course structure, the seminar follows a thematic rather than a chronological or geographical sequence. By moving from the theme of nationality to community to family to self, the tightening course focus underscores the enmeshed nature of Africa and Europe, past and present, other and self. To model inclusive approaches to historical inquiry, this course will integrate decolonial content and skill instruction. In terms of the course materials, the reading list emphasizes the voices of East African and Italo-East African historians, authors, poets, directors, and journalists. And in terms of the pedagogical approach, class activities will demonstrate a range of methods designed to investigate the history of those who did not write it.

**Course Description:**

“La mia casa è dove sono,” “My home is where I am.” Italo-Somali author Igiaba Scego’s famous assertion evokes our seminar’s focus: the cultural, historical, and political enmeshment of colonial Africa and postcolonial Europe. To do so, we will use small research workshops and student-led discussions to apply postcolonial and critical race theory to the study of primary materials like oral testimonies, political campaign materials, household objects, and work songs. We will also examine the problematics of the colonial archive, giving special attention to issues of access and information flow in private collections and government repositories. The concentric circles of nation, community, family, and self will frame our key arenas of investigation and debate: the connection between past colonialism and present migration, the shifting definitions of race, the formation of identity, and the meaning of home.

**By the end of this seminar, you will be able to:**

- 1) Connect settler colonialism in modern East Africa with formations of identity (such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) in contemporary Europe
- 2) Discuss migration and diaspora using Critical Race, Feminist, and postcolonial theory
- 3) Apply inclusive historical methodologies, like oral history, reading against the grain, and material culture studies to primary materials
- 4) Explain how historiography, as well as people and places, has been affected by systems of imperial power and control

**Texts:**

*Little Mother: A Novel* by Cristina Ubaq Ali Farah

*The Conscript: A Novel of Libya's Anticolonial War* by Gebreyesus Hailu

*Queen of Flowers and Pearls: A Novel* by Gabriella Ghermandi

*A History of Modern Ethiopia* by Bahru Zewde

*The Eritrean Struggle for Independence* by Ruth Iyob

**Films:**

*18 Ius Soli* dir. Fred Kuwornu (Italian with English subtitles)

**Reading Selections:**

*Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines* eds. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollfield

*Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith

*Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* by Anne McClintock

*Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* by Ann Laura Stoler

**Web Resources:**

Wolfsonian Institute – Object Collections  
(dishware, furniture, toys, and ephemera from East Africa [esp. Ethiopia], 1880-1955)

Archivio Luce – Colonial Photograph Collections  
(Fascist period photographs from East and North Africa [esp. Libya], 1922-1943)

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò – Postcolonial Lecture Series  
(recorded talks with Italo-Ethiopian, -Eritrean, and -Somali authors and poets, including Igiaba Scego, “My Home is Where I Am,” [New York University, 2013])