Course Description

This course is designed to expose students to South African life since the death of Nelson Mandela particularly in politics and education. When the news of Mandela’s death in 2013 travelled across the world, many media outlets broadcast a South Africa that was harmonious. In these images, people (black and white) lived together and suggested that South Africans now enjoyed a life that consisted of interracial harmony. On the contrary, many reports in the smaller media outlets alerted the world to the wide racial gaps in the country. They lamented the different unemployment rates, income gaps, health issues, and education realities to name a few. Students will see and study these realities in South Africa. Students will witness the disparities first hand. It is one thing to read about these differences, but the feeling when you are there makes these racial realities painfully clear. For example, the feeling of being in a supermarket and all of the whites cutting in front of you is just one example of the more subtle ways in which race plays out in this country. These subtle actions were not captured in the pictures that flooded the television after Mandela’s death, but are the reality of life in South Africa.

Students will see most of the important landmarks, such as the Hector Pieterson Memorial, the Apartheid Museum, Shanty Town in Soweto, Constitutional Hall, and the University of Johannesburg and one of its affiliated elementary/secondary schools, among others. Students will be expected to pay special attention to how much the political and educational arenas in the country have changed. To what extent are the outsiders and media correct when they describe this country as racially harmonious? How and why does this harmonious picture make its way across the world?

This course will also expose students to comparative K-16 educational experiences between South Africa and the United States. Students will research comparative statistical data on the quality of and access to formal schooling and learning opportunities (e.g., average years of schooling, share of total education spending, proportion of Gross Domestic Product spent on education, pupil-teacher ratios, etc.). In addition, students will compare and contrast struggles for educational equity in South Africa and the United States prior to and after apartheid and the classical phase (1950s and 1960s) of the Civil Rights Movement. Specifically, students will examine significant changes in educational experiences resulting from watershed educational legislation and judicial decisions such as the Bantu Education Act (1953), the Brown v. Board of Education U. S. Supreme Court cases (1954, 1955), the National Education Policy Act (in South Africa) (1995), and the South African Schools Act (1996). Students will also learn about contemporary parallels between a broad range of contemporary educational problems (e.g., school finance inequities, urban, suburban, and rural disparities, teachers’ union dominance, inadequate teacher preparation, etc.) and school choice policies (e.g., private, for-profit, independent, and charter schools) in South Africa and the United States. Many of the comparative education dialogues and studies will take place on site in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary South African schools.

Course Objectives

1. Expose students to intensive insertion in the South African context through travel, study and critical reflection on contemporary South Africa. Students will have the opportunity to
understand the nature of race relations through its history and presence. Moreover, they will understand the challenges of a country that has experienced apartheid and a world leader as great as Mandela.

2. Provide students with concrete opportunities to learn, understand, and evaluate pedagogies related to the construction of race in the twenty-first century.

3. Capitalize on the unique off-campus opportunities, peculiar to South Africa, while combining traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities.

4. Expose students to relevant social and political issues in South Africa, such as the ancient empires, Xhosa people, colonialism, and post-colonialism. To achieve this goal, the trip will provide significant opportunities for students to hear South Africans tell their stories.

5. Grant students an opportunity to see the complexities of race across the world.

6. Prepare students beforehand and throughout the trip with lessons and discussions in cross-cultural. In addition, there will be exercises in cross-cultural understanding, sensitivity exercises, to develop group cohesion before and in South Africa.

7. Make connections between the relevance of education abroad in South Africa and UAB courses that deal with Africa, the African Diaspora, African American Studies, Political Science, Education, Sociology, Anthropology, Classical Studies, Conflict Studies, Art, Music, Literature, Environmentalism, Health Sciences, Economics, and other subjects.

The course will be open to all students who will be sophomores at the time of the trip. We will allow anyone who shows interest in political science, education, and/or African American Studies. We will allow most other students the opportunity to participate. We hope that this experience will give students an opportunity to see how race continues to impact the American and South African experience today.

Requirements and Grading
The class will complete readings and meet prior to departure. Students must work in teams to complete a presentation on the various historical places that we will visit in the area. In addition they must watch films. They must be present for ALL class sessions or they will not be permitted to travel with the group. These pre-departure activities will be used to orient the students to South Africa, as well as team building.

Pre-Departure readings and films will include:

- Film, “Madiba”
- Readings, After Mandela, The Struggle for Freedom in Post-Apartheid South Africa
- Readings, The History of Education Under Apartheid

Students will begin writing journal entries regarding the trip prior to the departure. Once in South Africa, they are to write daily journals of their experiences (all places are indicated in the next section). Because the understanding race and its impact is so overwhelming, we expect to have two lecturers from the University (in addition to lectures from the two faculty leaders) speak to the class about the historical implications of the places that they will visit. After visiting such places, we will
reflect as a group, with guided discussion by Professors Lewis and Loder-Jackson to interrogate the legacy of race. We expect to have a formal time of reflection at least two times while in South Africa.

Assignments and Evaluation
All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted on the dates indicated.

Discussion Boards (15%) – Students are expected to participate in all discussion board activities pre and post departure.
Journal (25%) – Students are expected to keep daily journals/diaries in which they reflect on their experiences during the site visits and lectures. In addition, students are expected to share their observations and reflections verbally during the group reflection times.
Participation (35%) – All students—both undergraduate and graduate—will participate in pre-departure class sessions and be active participants in course reflection days.
All students—both undergraduate and graduate—will attend all planned events in South Africa, to be respectful and well-behaved representatives of UAB, and to participate actively in the visit and discussion at the University of Johannesburg. Students are expected to participate in all activities in the course, lectures, site visits, and days of reflection.
Reflection Paper (25%) – After the trip, students are expected to write a final paper that reflects on the learning and growth that occurred as a result of all the visits, discussions and activities in the program. Students should include information about the history, politics, society, economy, education, and culture of life in South Africa in their paper.

Students should assess their learning along a number of dimensions considering the experiences while in South Africa: What did you learn about race in South Africa? What did you learn from living in South African culture? What did you learn about yourself in terms of your skills, cross-cultural strengths and weaknesses, and interests in possible future directions? Students can choose to review each dimension of the program as a learning experience or to focus on themes that cut across program activities. Students are free to be creative in how they compose their paper.

A) All undergraduate students will write a paper of approximately 8-10 pages on some particular theme or topic of the course, selected in consultation with the instructor prior to departure. They will be expected to use at least three books or a combination of academic books and peer-reviewed articles dealing with their paper topic as well as primary sources. This research project is intended to promote student understanding of South Africa, and each student is encouraged to develop a research focus for a project that best serves his or her own academic disciplines and intellectual curiosity and that reflects on their experience in South Africa.

B) All graduate students will write a paper of approximately 12-15 pages on some particular theme or topic of the course, selected in consultation with the instructor prior to departure. They will be expected to use at least six books or a combination of academic books and peer-reviewed articles dealing with their paper topic as well as primary sources. This research project is intended to promote student understanding of South Africa, and each student is encouraged to develop a research focus for a project that best serves his or her own academic disciplines and intellectual curiosity and that reflects on their experience in South Africa.

Reflection Journals
Beginning with your arrival in Johannesburg, you should start keeping a journal. This diary is the place where you record your observations and experiences of your time in South Africa, as well as your personal reactions to what you are observing and experiencing on our site visits. Use the journal to reflect on your experiences and relate them to what you are reading about and
discussing in the course. During your first week, be sure to consider the following questions:
What are your reactions to your new reality in South Africa? What things strike you as unfamiliar and unexpected? What things seem familiar? How does what you’ve seen so far match or conflict with your prior expectations? Write at least five pages each week in your journal, and be prepared to present insights from your journal writing process in Days of Reflection seminar.

Disciplinary policy
There is a zero tolerance policy for student misbehavior during this trip. The faculty leaders do not regularly supervise participants’ behavior outside of class activities; any reports of students getting into trouble with local authorities may result in disciplinary action, possibly including the student returning home immediately and receiving a failing grade in the class. Students should know and abide by the UAB academic code of conduct policy in preparing course work. Students are required to sign a Behavior Policy form indicating that they agree to abide by the UAB Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct.

Course Schedule

May 3  
Pre Departure Meeting at UAB  
Madiba Viewing

May 4  
Pre Departure Meeting UAB  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 6  
Depart Birmingham for Johannesburg  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 7  
Day 1: Johannesburg - D  
Arrive at Johannesburg’s Oliver Tambo International Airport  
Transfer to accommodation  
Welcome Dinner  
Readings: After Mandela and The History of Education Under Apartheid

May 8  
Day 2: Johannesburg  
Full day guided tour of Soweto, including a visit to the Hector Pietersen Memorial Square in Soweto.  
Visit Mandela House.  
Lectures at University of Johannesburg  
Readings: After Mandela and The History of Education Under Apartheid

May 9  
Day 3: Johannesburg  
08H30: Depart hotel for a full day guided tour of Johannesburg.  
09H00: Visit Constitution Hill  
11H00: Apartheid Museum.  
Lectures at University of Johannesburg  
Readings: After Mandela and The History of Education Under Apartheid

May 10  
Day 4: Cradle-of-Humankind:  
Morning visit to Sterkfontein caves & Maropeng  
16H30: End your evening with entertainment at Lesedi Cultural Village (experience will involve a few different cultures in South Africa including Zulus)
May 11  **Day 5: Johannesburg/St Lucia**  
Check out of hotel. Drive from Jo’burg to St Lucia  
Reflection Day  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 12  **Day 6: St Lucia/Durban**  
08H00: Check out of hotel. Morning overland to Durban  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 13  **Day 7: Durban**  
Lecture Day  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 14  **Day 8: Durban/Cape Town**  
Check out of hotel.  
Fly from Durban to Cape Town  
Transfer to Table Mountain (weather permitting)  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 15  **Day 9: Cape Town**  
08H00: Depart hotel to Nelson Mandela Gateway  
09H00: Boat departs for Robben Island tour.  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 16  **Day 10: Cape Town D**  
Guided tour of the Cape Peninsula  
Chapman’s Peak Drive  
Boulder Penguin Colony  
Cape Point Nature Reserve.  
Farewell dinner at Marcos African Place  
Readings: After Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom

May 17  **Day 11: Cape Town departure**  
Transfer to Cape Town International Airport

May 18  **Arrive in Birmingham**

May 22  **Post Trip Meeting and Reflection Day**

May 24  **Class Discussion**