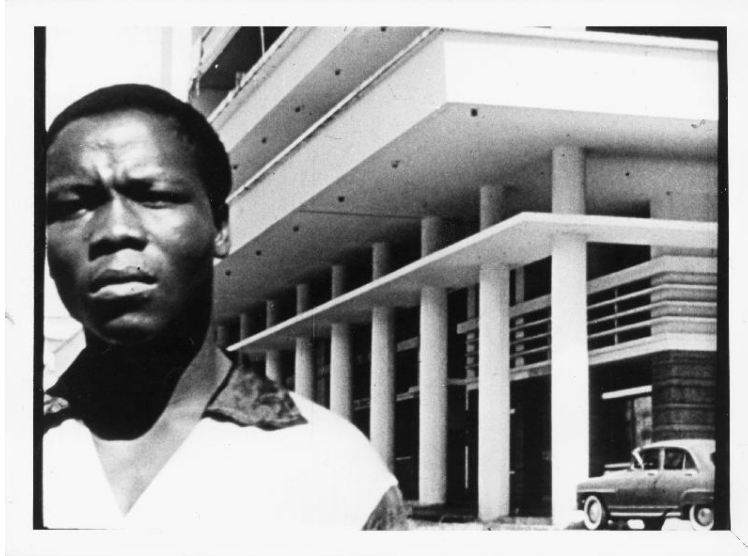


COLT 360gp: Fictions of Africa

Professor Richard McLaughlin (richarsm@usc.edu)

Mondays & Wednesdays,
10:00-11:50 AM, DMC 158



(Still from *Moi, un noir*, Jean Rouch, 1958)

Our course is entitled “Fictions of Africa,” which brings to the foreground one of the guiding themes we’ll be discussing, that there are multiple narratives surrounding the continent. This leads us to the question: who speaks for Africa and its different cultures? Which voices – colonizer, colonized, and other – have shaped how we perceive African cultures and set our expectations of African futures? We’ll investigate how this has been a contentious debate linked to the question of the autonomy of African countries during the anticolonial struggles of the 20th century.

We’ll begin exploring this idea of fiction(s) by looking at different and often competing perspectives written / filmed by Europeans and Africans, while also contextualizing these works by reading some historical and theoretical analyses of colonialism and anticolonial engagement, including writings by Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and V.Y. Mudimbe. We’ll also investigate the interrelated themes of displacement, exile, and return as they reemerge in the texts. As our historical scope moves into the latter half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, we’ll consider the prefix of the *post*colony as always anticipatory, and perhaps (as yet) unrealized, as postcolonial writers grapple with the historical, linguistic, and economic ties that bind them to the cultures and spaces of Western empire.

Texts will include films like *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966), *Moi, un noir* (Jean Rouch, 1958), and *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (Raoul Peck, 1990), as well as writings by Albert Camus (*The Stranger*, 1942), Kamel Daoud (*The Mersault Investigation*, 2013), Tsitsi Dangarembga (*Nervous Conditions*, 1988), Alain Mabanckou (*Blue White Red*, 1998), Teju Cole (*Every Day is for the Thief*, 2007), and Akwaeke Emezi (*The Death of Vivek Oji*, 2020).