

AFS/HIS 369
Religious Politics of Africa

Satisfies: CER, SBS+

Tues/Thurs. 9:30am-10:50am

Thematic Categories: "Law, Politics & Social Justice,"
"Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities"

Professor Shobana Shankar

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to many religions—indigenous belief systems, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It has also been, in many historical periods, a place of peaceful coexistence and a model of religious reconciliation. This course examines African religious encounters and exchanges. It highlights how Africa is a critical space of religious change and politics today, in an age when modernization has not erased religious power nor brought secularism. Topics to be covered include African religious traditions and their continuities in the global African diaspora, Islam and the rise of African empires, literacy, women's spiritual authority, education, European colonization and Christian missionaries, African-Arab-Asian Muslim connections, and religion and resistance to foreign domination. We will also explore many different kinds of writing including holy books and life histories/biographies as well as political tracts on religious freedom. A midterm exam, group project, and in-class quizzes, final assignment will be required.