

Core Course 2, “Themes in African History and Social Sciences”, MSc African Studies, University of Oxford

**Lecture on ‘Africa and China’
Jodie Yuzhou Sun**

China’s engagement with Africa during the last decade has generated media attention that generally portrays China as either Africa’s economic saviour or as its new imperial overlord. Many academic analysts have also characterised this relationship in monolithic terms. This lecture will both survey these analyses but also suggest that the China-Africa phenomenon needs to be understood as a series of engagements – economic, political, but also social and cultural – between a range of Chinese and African actors that have both potential benefits and costs for all those involved.

Without offering a comprehensive analysis, the lecture will explore the history of China’s relationship with Africa and the continuities and breaks in this relationship. It will analyse economic relations in the form of mineral extraction, the extent and form of China’s engagement with political change on the continent, and the ways in which Chinese migrants have interacted with African societies. It will also explore how Africans are seeking to shape their unequal relationship with Chinese influences and to negotiate advantages for themselves in both Chinese-influenced Africa and in China itself. The lecture will seek to locate China’s recent engagement with Africa in the context of the continent’s many centuries of interaction with global flows of goods, peoples and ideas.

Essay questions

1. To what extent is China-Africa partnership best understood as ‘win-win cooperation’?
2. Are the relations between Chinese and Africans shaped mainly by states or individuals?
3. Africans have little or no agency when it comes to their relationship with China. Discuss.

Core reading

Mazrui, Ali A. ‘The yellow man’s burden: Race and revolution in Sino-African relations’, in Adem, Sefuden (ed.) *China’s Diplomacy in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013, pp. 1-25. [available as e-book]

Lee, Ching-Kwan. ‘Raw Encounters: Chinese Managers, African Workers and the Politics of Casualization in Africa’s Chinese Enclaves’, *China Quarterly* 199, (2009): 647-666.

Mohan, Giles and Lampert, Ben. ‘Negotiating China: Reinserting African agency into China-Africa relations’, *African Affairs* 112, 446 (2013): 92-110.

Further reading

General overview

Large, Daniel. “Beyond ‘dragon in the bush’: The study of China-Africa relations”, *African Affairs* 107. 426 (2008): 45-61.

Adem, Sefudun (ed.) *China's Diplomacy in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013.

Taylor, Ian. *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Shinn, David H. and Eisenman, Joshua. *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Sautman, Barry and Yan, Hairong. *East Mountain Tiger West Mountain Tiger: China the West and 'Colonialism' in Africa*. University of Maryland School of Law, 2006.

History and historiography

Duyvendak, J. J. L. *China's Discovery of Africa: Lectures Given at the University of London on January 22 and 23, 1947*. London: Arthur Probsthain, 1949.

Ogunsanwo, Alaba. *China's Policy in Africa, 1958-1971*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Snow, Philip. *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988.

Strauss, Julia C. "The past in the present: Historical and rhetorical lineages in China's relations with Africa," *The China Quarterly*, 199 (2009): 777-95.

Arshan Li, 'African studies in China in the twentieth century: A historiographical survey', *African Studies Review* 48, 1 (2005), 59-87.

Investments, trade, and aid

Rotberg, Robert I. *China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008.

Brautigam, Deborah. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Brautigam, Deborah. *Will Africa Feed China?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Lee, Ching-Kwan. *The Global Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor and Foreign Investment in Africa*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Multifaceted engagements

Hess, Steve and Aidoo, Richard. 'Charting the roots of anti-Chinese populism in Africa: A comparison of Zambia and Ghana', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 49. 2 (2014): 129-147.

Monson, Jamie. 'Remembering work on the Tazara Railway in Africa and China, 1965–2011: When "new men" grow old', *African Studies Review*, 56. 1 (2013): 45-64.

Large, Daniel. 'China and the Contradictions of 'Non-interference' in Sudan', *Review of African Political Economy* 35. 103 (2008): 93-106.

Mohan, Giles and Lampert, Ben. 'Negotiating China: Reinserting African Agency into China-Africa Relations', *African Affairs* 112, 446 (2013): 92-110.

Labour relations

Baah, A. Y. and H. Jauch (eds.). *Chinese Investments in Africa: A Labor Perspective*. Windhoek: African Labour Research Network, 2009.

Brooks, A. 'Spinning and weaving discontent: labour relations and the production of meaning at Zambia-China Mulungushi textiles', *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*, 36. 1 (2000): 113-32.

Lee, Ching-Kwan. 'Raw encounters: Chinese managers, African workers and the politics of casualization in Africa's Chinese enclaves', *The China Quarterly*, 199 (2009): 647-66.

Chinese migrants in Africa

Yap, Melanie and Man, Dianne Leong. *Colour, Confusion and Concessions: The History of the Chinese in South Africa*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1966.

Mohan, Giles, Lampert, Ben, Tan-Mullins, May and Chang, Daphne. *Chinese Migrants and Africa's Development: New Imperialists or Agents of Change?* London: Zed Books, 2014.

Park, Yoon Jung. 'Boundaries, borders and borderland constructions: Chinese in contemporary South Africa and the region', *African Studies*, 69. 3 (2010): 457-79.

Culture, literature and education

King, Kenneth. *China's Aid and Soft Power in Africa: The Case of Education and Training*. Oxford: James Currey, 2013.

Thornber, Karen Laura. 'Breaking discipline, integrating literature: Africa-China relationships reconsidered', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 53. 4 (2016): 694-721.

Saavedra, Martha. 'Representations of Africa in a Hong Kong soap opera: The limits of enlightened humanitarianism in the last breakthrough', *The China Quarterly*, 199 (2009): 760-776.

Marianne Ferme and Cheryl Schmitz, 'Writings on the Wall: Chinese material traces in an African Landscape', *Journal of Material Culture*, 19. 4 (2014): 375-399.

Online sources:

The China-Africa Knowledge Project Resource Hub: <http://china-africa.ssrc.org/>

The SAIS China Africa Research Initiative (SAIS-CARI): <http://www.sais-cari.org/>

The China Africa Project: <http://www.chinaafricaproject.com/>

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: <http://www.focac.org/eng/>