

Charles Ambler

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Charles Ambler is Professor of History at the University of Texas at El Paso and Dean of the Graduate School (a position he earlier held). He earned his PhD in African History from Yale University and has done research on eastern, central, southern, and West Africa. He is the author or editor of three books and numerous chapters, articles and reviews on various aspects of modern African history. He teaches classes on African and Middle Eastern history at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In 2010 he served as President of the African Studies Association, the major professional organization for scholars, teachers and practitioners with interests in Africa.

As a scholar and administrator, Ambler has been awarded major grants from the National Science Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, the Sloan Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has been a Mellon Faculty Fellow at Harvard University, a Research Associate at the Universities of London, Zambia and Nairobi, and a senior visiting member of the African Studies faculty at Oxford University. He has served in a number of capacities in national professional organizations and in the University of Texas System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating.

Education

B.A. Middlebury College, history, Magna Cum Laude,
Highest Honors, Phi Beta Kappa
M.A. Yale University, (African) history, 1976
Ph.D. Yale University, (African) history, 1983

Teaching, Administrative, and Research Appointments

Dean of the Graduate School (formerly Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies), University of Texas at El Paso, 2014-present and 1996-2006
Professor, History Department, University of Texas at El Paso, 1997-present; Associate Professor, 1989-97; Assistant Professor, 1984-89. Department Chair, 1989-93
Senior Associate Member, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, Spring 2006
Director, McNair Scholars Program, UTEP, 1999-2003
Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Spring 1994
Program Officer (Intergovernment Program Assignee), Division of Research Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1990-91
Research Associate, Institute for African Studies and History Department, University of Zambia, Summer 1988
Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow in History, Harvard University, 1986-87
Assistant Professor of History, Niagara University, NY, 1980-84
Research Associate, University of Nairobi, 1977-78
Teacher, Mua Hills Secondary School, Kenya, 1972-74

Research Grants and Fellowships

National Endowment for the Humanities, Fellowship for College and University Teachers, 1999
UTEP Faculty Development Grants, 1995 & 1996

National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Stipend, 1994
American Council of Learned Societies Travel Grant, 1989
University of Texas, University Research Institute grant, 1988 (research in Zambia)
Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellowship in the Humanities, Harvard University, 1986-87
Isaak Killam Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Dalhousie University, Canada, 1984-85 (declined)
Whiting Fellowship in the Humanities, 1979
Yale University, Concilium on International and Area Studies, Fellowship, 1978 (research in Kenya)
Fulbright-Hays, Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship, 1977 (research in Kenya and England)

Publications

- Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1988.
- Drugs in Africa: Histories and Ethnographies of Use, Trade and Control*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014 (Co-edited with Gernot Klantschnig and Neil Carrier).
- Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa*. Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, and Durban, South Africa, Natal University Press, 1992 (Co-edited with Jonathan Crush).
- “Introduction” (with Gernot Klantschnig and Neil Carrier). In *Drugs in Africa: Histories and Ethnographies of Use, Trade and Control*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014 (Co-edited with Gernot Klantschnig and Neil Carrier), 1-24.
- “The Drug Empire: The Control of Drugs in Africa in Global Perspective.” In *Drugs in Africa*, 25-48.
- “The Specter of Degeneration: Alcohol and Race in Colonial West Africa,” in *Fighting Drink, Drugs, and ‘Immorality’: Global Anti-Vice Activism, c. 1890-1950*, ed. by Jessica Pliley, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Robert Kramm-Masaoka, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2015.
- “Projecting the Modern Colonial State: The Mobile Cinema in Kenya,” in *Film and the End of Empire*, ed. by Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe, London, British Film Institute, 2011, pp. 199-223.
- “A School in the Interior”: African Studies: Engagement and Interdisciplinarity,” *African Studies Review*, 54 (2011): 1-17.
- “Cowboy Modern: African Audiences, Hollywood Films, and Visions of the West.” In *Going to the Movies*, ed. by Richard Maltby, Robert Allen, and Melvyn Stokes, Exeter University Press, 2007, pp. 348-363.
- “Popular Films and Colonial Audiences: The Movies in Northern Rhodesia.” In *Film Histories: An Introduction and Reader*, ed. by Paul Grainge, Mark Jancovich, and Sharon Monteith, University of Toronto Press, 2007, pp. 314-339 [reprint of “Popular Films and Colonial Audiences” (2001)].
- “Popular Films and Colonial Audiences in Central Africa.” In *Hollywood Abroad: Audiences and Cultural Exchange*, ed. by Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, London, The British Film Institute, 2004, pp.133-157. [slightly revised reprint of “Popular Films and Colonial Audiences” (2001).]
- “Alcohol and the Slave Trade in West Africa, 15th - 19th Centuries.” In *Drugs, Labor, and Colonial Expansion*, ed. by Daniel Bradburd and William Jankowiak, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2003, pp. 73-87.
- “Alcohol, Racial Segregation and Popular Politics in Northern Rhodesia.” In *The Decolonization Reader*, ed. by James Lesueur. London, Routledge, 2003, pp. 341-57 [reprint].
- “Writing African Leisure History.” In *Leisure in Urban Africa*, ed. By Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney, Trenton, N.J., Africa World Press, 2003, pp. 3-18.
- Guest editor, with Emmanuel Akyeampong, special issue, Leisure in African History, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 35 (2002): 1-136.
- “Leisure in African History: An Introduction,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 35 (2002): 1-16 (with Emmanuel Akyeampong).

- “Mass Media and Leisure in Africa,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 35 (2002): 119-36.
- “Popular Films and Colonial Audiences: The Movies in Northern Rhodesia,” *The American Historical Review*, 106 (Feb. 2001): 81-105. Excerpted in Melvin E. Page and Richard Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 5th edition, Longman, 2004, pp. 15-16. Reprints, see above.
- “Meja Mwangi’s *Going Down River Road*.” In *African Novels in the Classroom*, ed. by Jean Hay. Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 2000, pp. 177-90.
- “East Africa: Metropolitan Action and Local Initiative.” In *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. V: Historiography*, ed. by Robin Winks, general ed., W.R. Louis, Oxford, Oxford University Press 1999, pp. 500-512.
- “‘What the World is Going to Come to’: The Prophetic Tradition in Colonial Central Kenya.” In *Revealing Prophets: Prophecy in East African History*, ed. by David M. Anderson and Douglas H. Johnson. London, James Currey and Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1994, pp. 221-39.
- “Alcohol in Southern African Labor History.” In Crush and Ambler, *Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa*, pp. 1-55 (with Jonathan Crush).
- “Alcohol and the Control of Labor on the Copperbelt.” In Crush and Ambler, *Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa*, pp. 339-366.
- “Drunks, Brewers and Chiefs: Alcohol Regulation in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1939.” In *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History*, ed. by Susanna Barrows and Robin Room. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1991, pp. 165-83.
- “Alcohol, Racial Segregation and Popular Politics in Northern Rhodesia.” *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990): 295-313.
- “The Renovation of Custom in Colonial Kenya: The 1932 Generation Succession Ceremonies in Embu.” *Journal of African History*, 30 (1989): 139-56.
- “Alcohol and Disorder in Precolonial Africa.” Boston University, African Studies Center, *Working Paper*, no. 126, 1987.
- “Population Movement, Social Formation and *Exchange*: Central Kenya in the Nineteenth Century.” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 18 (1985): 201-22.
- Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia*, ed. by Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey, Ian R. Tyrrell. Santa Barbara, CA, ABC CLIO, 2003. Entries on Southern Africa, South African Breweries and Shebeens. Member, Advisory Board.
- American Historical Association's *Guide to the Historical Literature*, general ed., Mary Beth Norton. New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995. Entries on East Africa, vol. I: 588-90.
- “Alcohol,” *New Encyclopedia of Africa*, ed. by John Middleton and Joseph Miller. Farmington Hills, MI, Charles Scribner’s, 2008, vol. 4, pp. 518-520.
- “Urbanism and Urbanization: Historic,” *New Encyclopedia of Africa*, ed. by John Middleton and Joseph Miller. Farmington Hills, MI, Charles Scribner’s, 2008, vol. 5, pp. 147-150.
- “Alcohol.” *Encyclopedia of Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. by John Middleton. New York, Charles Scribner's, 1997, vol. 1, pp. 27-29.
- “African Audiences,” podcast, Africa Past and Present, episode 34, <http://afripod.aodl.org/>, Michigan State University, October 2009.

Work In Progress

Alcohol and Empire. A book-length study of the debates over the effects of alcohol use and control over its production and consumption in colonial and post-colonial British Africa in the context of the development of thinking on empire, race, and difference during the last century and a half.

Mass Media and Popular Culture in Modern Africa. A book-length study, for a student audience, that traces the inter-connection between the development of popular cultures and publics and the emergence and evolution of mass media—print, radio, film, video, and new media. Under contract with Ohio University Press in the Africa and the Modern World Series.

Reviews

Approximately 50 reviews in leading scholarly journals including the *American Historical Review*, *Journal of African History* and *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.

Conference Papers and Invited Lectures (since 2008)

- “Decolonization and Drug Regulation,” conference, “Under Control? Alcohol and Drug Regulation, Past and Present,” London, UK, June 21-23, 2013.
- “The Specter of Degeneration: Alcohol and Race in West Africa in the early Twentieth Century,” invited paper, Conference on Global Anti-Vice Activism, ca. 1870-1940, Monte Verità Conference Center, Ascona Switzerland, April 2012
- “African Audiences from Hollywood to Nollywood,” International Association for Media and History Conference, Copenhagen, July 2011
- “Work, Leisure and the Commercial Revolution in Central Africa,” invited paper, international research center on Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History at Humboldt University Berlin, June 2011
- “‘A School in the Interior’: African Studies: Engagement and Interdisciplinarity,” Presidential Address, African Studies Association, San Francisco, Nov. 2010
- “African Audiences from Hollywood to Nollywood,” Invited Lecture, University of Florida Conference on Nigeria at 50, Gainesville, Oct. 2010 [honorarium and expenses paid]
- “The Mobile Cinema in Kenya: Film Shows in the Era of Decolonization,” Conference on Film and the End of Empire, Pittsburgh, September 2010 [expenses paid]
- “Classroom Management Techniques for Student Success in Large Classes,” (with Sunay Palsole, David Yaskin, and Roy Mathew), Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching, Washington, DC, June 2010
- “African Audiences from Hollywood to Nollywood,” African Studies Association, Presidential Lecture, Rutgers University, March 2010. Delivered in conjunction with a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of the ASA which is located at Rutgers.
- “African Audiences from Hollywood to Nollywood,” First Annual African Studies Association, Presidential Lecture, African Studies Program, Michigan State University, October 2009 [transportation, expenses, honorarium]
- “Tracking the ‘Drunken Native’: Alcohol, Native Peoples and Extinctionist Thought,” Fifth International Conference on the History of Drugs and Alcohol, Glasgow, Scotland, June 2009.
- “The Drug Empire: The Control of Alcohol and Drugs in Africa Since the Late Nineteenth Century,” invited talk, Africa Workshop, Rice University, October 2008 [transportation, expenses, and honorarium]
- “Leisure and Commerce in Modern Africa,” keynote talk, conference on Leisure in Africa, British Institute in Eastern Africa, Naivasha, Kenya, July 2008.
- “African Audiences from Hollywood to Nollywood,” University of Nigeria, Nsukka, June 2008.
- “Drug and Alcohol Regulation in Africa in Historical Perspective,” University of Nigeria, Lagos, June 2008.