

South Africa - From Apartheid State to Rainbow Nation?

The purpose of this seminar is to understand the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa, as well as the ongoing issues arising out of South Africa's Apartheid past.

Apartheid was a system of racial segregation in South Africa enforced through legislation by the National Party (NP) governments, the ruling party from 1948 to 1994, under which the rights of the majority black inhabitants were curtailed and white minority rule was maintained. During the Apartheid period the black majority was prohibited from living in many areas, and only white South Africans could vote. Electoral districts were manipulated to ensure that pro-apartheid members of the white community were able to maintain power even within the white only electoral system.

Ultimately, apartheid led to massive disparities in education, health and wealth distribution. Apartheid ended in 1994 following a struggle led by South African democracy activists from organization such as the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party, and many others. Nevertheless, challenges arising out of inequality, illiteracy, housing and crime, and racial tensions remain.

Day 1: Johannesburg – City of Contrasts

Today we focus on contrasts in post-apartheid Johannesburg. Our first stop is Liliesleaf Farm, former hideout of the ANC leadership and site at which many of Nelson Mandela's co-accused was arrested prior to the Rivonia Trial, now a museum. There we gain an introductory understanding of apartheid and the struggle against it.

Afterwards, we head to the Johannesburg CBD via the wealthy northern suburbs, noticing the extreme security measures taken by home owners as we go.

During much of the apartheid period, South Africa's black population was prohibited from living in and around the city centre. Once a prestigious area, from the 1980s, the breakdown in enforcement of the apartheid residential restrictions led to a mass influx of squatters and poverty, and a breakdown of security in and around central Johannesburg. This in turn led to many corporate entities withdrawing to other business centres, and "white flight" whereby white citizens feared (and sometimes continue to fear) entering the CBD.

In recent years, the South African government and City of Johannesburg tried to rejuvenate the CBD, however significant issues including homelessness, the presence of illegal squatters in buildings, and neglect remain.

Our tour takes us to the top of the Africa's tallest building, the Calton Centre for a panoramic view of central Johannesburg. Afterwards we descend to Gandhi Square

as we take in the character of central Johannesburg and the issues that the city faces.

Overnight: Sandton area hotel, Johannesburg

Day 2: Soweto and the Apartheid Museum

This morning we travel to Soweto (South Western Township). Part city, part shanty-town/slum and home to an estimated 1.3 million people, Soweto was for many years identified with the struggle against apartheid, and an area feared by many white South Africans due to its poverty and resulting issues (including crime). In 1976 an unsuccessful uprising against apartheid rule arose out of Soweto.

On our tour, we take in the different parts of Soweto from informal shanty like settlements to Soweto's own "Beverly Hills". Our tour exposes us to Soweto's culture and history, including the Hector Pieterse memorial and the homes of Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Winnie Mandela.

In the afternoon we continue to the national apartheid museum (located on the fringe of the CBD and thus giving us another opportunity to talk about the history of the CBD) before returning for dinner with young political activists from the Johannesburg region (tbc).

Overnight: Sandton area hotel, Johannesburg

Day 3: Alexandria and Political Briefing from Local Political Leader

Having experienced Alexandria's more famous "cousin" Soweto, this morning we get another chance to experience another area historically linked with the struggle for liberation in South Africa, and another struggling with issues of poverty, development and identity.

Our walking tour is led by an Alexandria local with a real chance to get to know the locals and hear their views.

Afterwards, we return to our accommodation where we are briefed by a local political leader on the challenges facing the Johannesburg region.

Overnight: Sandton area hotel, Johannesburg

Day 4: Social Issues and Cultural Village

Today we look at social issues in South African society, and how the battle for equality amongst various under empowered groups continues to be fought in the context of South Africa's broader political struggle for equality.

Amongst those who we meet is a campaigner against homophobic violence in deeply traditional communities, a women's rights advocate, and a key advocate of rights for laborers.

In the evening we take a break from politics, visiting a model African village for a cultural show and display, before sleeping in traditional African accommodation.

Overnight: model cultural village, Johannesburg region

Day 5: Day Safari

Today we get up early for a day safari in the Pilansberg game reserve.

Overnight: Sandton area hotel, Johannesburg

Day 6: Travel to Cape Town

Today we are transferred to the airport and fly to Cape Town, the smaller home of South Africa's parliament. There we are taken on a walking tour in the heart of the city focusing on the key landmarks and historic buildings in and around inner Cape Town.

In the evening we meet a leading South African political analyst who will discuss whether there is an effective and viable opposition in South Africa today, and likely political trends.

Overnight: Sea Point area hotel, Cape Town

Day 7: Nelson Mandela's legacy in Cape Town

Today we enjoy a walking tour exploring the activities of Nelson Mandela generally, and in Cape Town in particular. As part of this tour, we explore Mandela's political ideology, legacy, and the negotiations that brought about an end to white minority rule.

In the afternoon we travel to Robben Island, location of the prison which held dozens of leading anti-apartheid activists (including Mandela for 18 years). Our tour is guided by a former political detainee, and will include Mandela's tiny cell, the quarry where he and his fellow prisoners performed hard labor, and various other parts of the prison complex.

Overnight: Sea Point area hotel, Cape Town

Day 8: Parliament and District 6

Today we visit and tour parliament and learn about democratic South Africa's legislative process. Included in the tour is the chamber as well as the Apartheid era parliamentary chamber, and a view into Cape Town's presidential residence. We will generally also meet a member of parliament for a briefing on key contemporary political issues as he or she sees them.

Afterwards we visit the District 6 Museum, dedicated to understanding the oppression in this area of Cape Town from which black inhabitants were removed, and the area's ongoing regeneration.

Overnight: Sea Point area hotel, Cape Town

Day 9: Cape Peninsula

Today we visit the world famous Table Mountain. Later we tour the spectacular cape peninsula and take in the sites of this beautiful part of the world. Our tour ends this evening, but we can arrange an extension on your accommodation for you to take in the sites of Cape Town, one of the world's premier tourist destinations.

