Guidelines for Authors and Special Issue Editors

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Introducing *Africa Today*

*Africa Today* publishes peer-reviewed, scholarly articles and book reviews in a broad range of academic disciplines on topics related to contemporary Africa.

We seek to be a venue for interdisciplinary approaches, diverse perspectives, and original research in the humanities and social sciences. This includes work on social, cultural, political, historical, and economic subjects.

Recent special issues have been on topics such as the future of African artistic practices, the socio-cultural life of bus stations in Africa, and family-based health care in Ghana.

*Africa Today* has been on the forefront of African Studies research since 1954. From its origins as the bulletin of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), *Africa Today* gradually evolved into a premiere academic journal in the field.

In its initial decades, the journal was driven by founding editors Homer Jack, George M. Houser, and George W. Shepherd Jr. The bulletin contained news pieces, editorials, interviews, policy analyses, announcements, and calendars of events that occurred in Africa. Contributions focused primarily on African politics, economics, and society.

In 1967, financial oversight of *Africa Today* was transferred to the non-profit organization Africa Today Associates, while editorial and publishing responsibilities were transferred to their new partner, the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) at the University of Denver. Between 1967 and 1995, the journal became increasingly scholarly yet maintained a progressive political stance.

During 1995–1999, publication was at Lynne Rienner. With Angelique Haugerud as editor-in-chief, *Africa Today* completed its transformation into a peer-reviewed journal publishing articles of high quality Africanist scholarship of a global and comparative nature.

In 1999 the journal moved to Indiana University Press and the African Studies Program at IU Bloomington became its new editorial home. The new editorial team worked to revive the journal in a number of ways, including a new cover design and interior layout, new editorial board, new emphasis on research-based articles, and a broad scope of disciplines.

Today, the IU Bloomington-based editorial board remains committed to publishing scholarly work of the highest quality in a vibrant mix of open issues and special thematic issues, and featuring dynamic cover art.
Article Submission Guidelines for Authors

_Africa Today_, an academic and peer-reviewed international journal, has been on the forefront of African studies research for more than forty-five years. Published in conjunction with Indiana University Press and the Program in African Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, _Africa Today_ seeks exciting new work, encourages interdisciplinary research, and is a venue for diverse perspectives on a broad range of topics. The editors accept submissions based on original research in any humanities and social science discipline. Recent issues include works focusing on social, cultural, political, historical, and economic issues, as well as special issues focusing on complex topics from multiple perspectives.

_Africa Today_ invites research articles by prospective contributors that:

1. Offer both theoretical and comparative perspectives to a broad international audience interested in contemporary debates concerning the African continent.

2. Relate to new areas of inquiry and theoretical developments and contribute to and transform current scholarly debates.

3. Feature a rigorous analytic framework and clarity of prose.

4. Pay attention to ethical issues involved in the study of the African continent.

_Africa Today_ will accept only original submissions that have not been previously published and are not concurrently submitted to another journal for consideration. Exceptions may be granted for works that have appeared in non-English-language publications; in this case, the author must notify _Africa Today_ of this fact and, if the submission is approved, obtain permission to reprint from the original publisher. All articles are published according to the conventions of standard American English, and it is the author’s responsibility to arrange for and approve translation before submitting to _Africa Today_.

Issue 66.1’s cover image is of the Diamalaye, Layene mosque.
Africa Today Review Process

All manuscripts are given an initial review by the editorial collective. At that point, the editors will either inform the author that the article has been declined or initiate the journal’s double-blind peer-review process. Authors are encouraged to suggest scholars who might review the manuscript, providing their institutional affiliations and email addresses. They may indicate scholars whom they prefer not to review the manuscript. The editor is not bound by these suggestions but will respect them whenever possible. Suggested reviewers should not present a conflict of interest; for example, they should not be employed at the same institution as the author or be closely involved in the author’s research. Each article sent out for review is sent to two or three expert, anonymous reviewers, who are selected by the journal’s editors and are asked to disclose any conflicts of interest before accepting the assignment. All reviewers read the work carefully and provide a thorough report as a voluntary service to the journal. A decision about whether to accept, reject, or invite revisions to the article is generally made within three months of sending it out for review.

Authors should prepare their manuscripts to facilitate anonymous review. Any identifying references to the author should be removed prior to submission.

Submitting a Manuscript

The journal’s online submission system is the only acceptable means of submitting a manuscript for review. Manuscripts sent directly to the editorial office will not be considered.

When uploading your submission, please upload three documents: a cover page, the article manuscript, and an images document containing photos, illustrations, etc. (if applicable).

Cover Page

State title of paper; author name; institutional affiliation; name, address, and email address of author to whom correspondence should be sent; acknowledgment (if any) of financial or other assistance. The cover page Word document should be named LASTNAME_coverpage.docx.

Manuscripts

All submissions should be double-spaced. Use the 12-point Times New Roman font, and put page numbers in the upper right corner. The manuscript Word document should be named LASTNAME_manuscript.docx. Organize your manuscript in the following order:

Title
Abstract
Text (including tables)
Endnotes
References
Title and Abstract

Place title and abstract on a single page. Summarize the article in 150 or fewer words. Do not include citations in the abstract. This is one of the most important elements of the manuscript. The abstract should communicate the research topic and/or question, the main finding or argument, and the significance of the contribution.

Text

Start on a new page. All submissions should have a word count between 8,000 and 10,000 words including notes and references. Manuscripts under 8,000 or over 10,000 words will not be reviewed. Author’s name should not appear in the text.

Non-English Words

We follow a general policy of italicizing foreign words, as explained in Chicago 17 sections 7.53 and 7.54. We also italicize English and non-English words and phrases when referred to as the word itself (see 7.63).

Endnotes

Start on a new page. Endnotes should be used only for substantive comments on the content of the article. Number consecutively starting with 1. When submitting the final version of the manuscript for copyediting, be certain to have uncoupled or de-linked your document from any citation management software such as Endnote, Mendeley, and Zotero because such software interferes with the copyediting process.

References

References should follow Chicago’s parenthetical author-date format as described in The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th ed., chapter 15. See examples in the Format of References section below.

Africa Today takes plagiarism very seriously, and asks authors to be sure that they have properly acknowledged the scholarly work of others. Failure to do so can be considered grounds for the rejection of a submitted article.

Images Document for Photos, Maps, and Other Illustrations

Authors are encouraged to submit materials that supplement and enhance their published articles, such as photographs. Authors may submit up to seven images. Africa Today may consider images for the cover illustration. Please note that Africa Today does not offer art-production services; therefore, for maps, charts, and drawings, we accept only work of professional quality. For maps, use an official map as a base to ensure accuracy.

When submitting a manuscript that references images, do not embed the images within the manuscript. Instead, create a separate Word document named LASTNAME_images_for_review.docx in which you place low-resolution copies of the
images with the caption beneath each image. Construct the captions so that they are logical and informative in themselves, perhaps restating or expanding upon information provided in the text. Preface each caption with an appropriate label, such as “Figure 1.” to correspond with the caption list and the references in the main manuscript. Within the manuscript, indicate the location where each image should be placed by inserting on a new line the tag [Figure 1 about here]. In the paragraph preceding this line, the figure should be mentioned explicitly by number (and in correct numerical order) within an appropriate sentence.

When your paper is accepted, we will ask you to submit high-resolution images for publication according to the following guidelines:

List all figures and caption text in a single document named LASTNAME_images_andcaptions.docx. Do not embed any images in that file. Instead, upload print-ready, high-resolution image files to the online journal system. The images must be in JPG or TIF format. The resolution must be at least 300 pixels per inch (ppi) at six inches wide; however, line art should be submitted at 1200 ppi or greater. Name the image files following the pattern LASTNAME_Figure_1.tif.

Image permissions and copyright: Authors are responsible for obtaining all permissions required to publish an image. Within the Images Document, please indicate the source of each image and whether you: (1) are the creator of the image; (2) have permission from the copyright holder to use the image; (3) are using an image in the public domain or one licensed under a Creative Commons license; or (4) believe there is a fair use case for publishing the image. Africa Today does not pay licensing fees for copyrighted images; any such fees are the responsibility of the author.

Format of References

References within Text

Citations of sources should be made within the body of the text, following the parenthetical author-date style from The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, according to the guidelines in “Chapter 15. Author-Date References” or in the “Author-Date Style” of the online Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide at https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/.

The basic Chicago guidelines are:

- When the author's name already appears in the text, the date of cited work should appear in parentheses, e.g., (1988). When the
author’s name does not appear in the text, the author and date of source should appear in parentheses, e.g., (Smith 1988). When a specific page number or page numbers are to be cited, the page number(s) should follow the date, after a comma, e.g., (Smith 1988, 17).

- Use “et al.” for more than three authors; the complete list of names must be given in references cited.
- When there is more than one work by the same author from the same year, put the titles of the works in alphabetical order and then mark the year with lowercase letters, e.g., 1988a, 1988b, and so on.
- The original publication date should precede later publication dates in brackets within parentheses, e.g., (Smith [1896] 1969).
- A series of references should be separated by semicolons within the parentheses, e.g., (Jones 1989; Jones and Smith 1998; Smith 1977).

Reference List at End of Manuscript

Follow The Chicago Manual of Style parenthetical author-date format (see The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, 2017) for the reference list. The list should be in alphabetical order. Capitalize titles of books, articles, and journals using headline-style capitalization, e.g., The History of Africa. Format the list using hanging indents (Ctrl-T in Microsoft Word).

Examples

Book


Chapters from Books


Journal Articles


Computer Files

Authors analyzing this type of data should cite source, including author (producer or distributor if no author), publication date (type “n.d.” if none is provided), title, date
accessed, and website address. If no author is provided, replace it with the producer or distributor of the article or the website. Examples:


**Interviews/Verbal Information Collected by the Author**

In referring to a specific interview by the author, in-text citation and references-cited entries should follow the same conventions as outlined above, e.g.: (Smith 1998).


In cases where the author cites information gained not through formal interviews but through, for example, casual social contact over a period of time, the author should include in the text the names, place of contact, and approximate range of dates of contact with these persons. In cases where it is not possible to identify an “informant” or respondent by name (for example, for political reasons), the author may use a pseudonym (and use it consistently in all text citations and references-cited entries).

**Submission Preparation Checklist**

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their submission’s compliance with all the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these guidelines.

- The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration.
- All required files have been submitted according to the directions above.
- The submission files are in Microsoft Word, OpenOffice, or RTF file format.
- The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the Author Guidelines. For example, the text is double-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics, rather than underlining; and where available, URLs for the references have been provided.
Special Issue Proposal Guidelines for Guest Editors

*Africa Today* regularly publishes special issues on topics that illuminate emerging or under-represented areas of inquiry in African Studies. The editors seek topics that lend themselves to interdisciplinary exchanges and analysis. Recent special issues have focused on topics such as: African artistic practices and new media, the socio-cultural life of bus stations in Africa, and family-based healthcare in Ghana.

*Africa Today* is a platform for approaches that are possible only in an interdisciplinary journal. Being a guest editor of a special issue is an opportunity to bring innovative research and methodologies to a broad audience.

Those interested in guest editing a special issue are encouraged to submit a proposal for consideration to afrtoday@indiana.edu.

What to Include in Your Proposal

1) Information about the guest editor(s):
   a) Contact details;
   b) Brief CVs;
   c) How the special issue relates to the current scholarship of the guest editor(s).

2) Description of the special issue (1000–1500 words in length), including:
   a) A working title for the special issue;
   b) An overview of proposed aims, scope, and intended focus;
   c) Justification for the topic; i.e., the extent to which the proposed special issue:
      i) Makes an original, coherent, innovative contribution to the topic;
      ii) Stimulates wide-ranging debate and informed discussion that would appeal to a broad interdisciplinary audience of African Studies scholars;
iii) Crosses intellectual boundaries and makes a compelling case for why the topic matters within disciplinary fields, and beyond them, extending outside the scholarly community;

d) The theoretical framework and empirical content of the special issue;

e) Discussion of the special issue's relationship to existing scholarship and recent *Africa Today* content, and how the contribution will advance knowledge in African Studies;

f) Elaboration on originality of approach and conceptualization in the papers;

g) Timeline for submission of papers for double-blind peer review.

3) Proposed titles and abstracts for each paper (300-450 words each) containing:

   a) Clear and original argument;

   b) Findings and their significance;

   c) Relevance and/or what it adds to our knowledge on its subject;

   d) Identification of the sources used;

   e) Relationship to existing scholarship on the subject.

4) Proposed contributors’ bios or brief CVs, and contact details.

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**Evaluation of Proposals and Peer Review of Articles**

*Africa Today* editors will evaluate the proposal based on the preceding criteria and the expected quality of the articles. If the proposal passes this initial review, then *all papers in the proposed special issue will be double-blind peer reviewed.

Once a proposal is accepted, the authors submit their papers for peer review via Indiana University Press’s Open Journal System (OJS), which is the required web-based interface for communications during the processes of peer review, revision, editing, and publication.
Role and Obligations of Guest Editors

Guest editors are responsible for assisting the *Africa Today* editorial staff in: 1) reviewing the articles for possible publication, and then 2) processing articles accepted for publication.

**Reviewing the articles for possible publication**

Guest editors work to ensure that contributors submit their manuscripts in OJS. The guest editors also assist *Africa Today* editors and editorial staff as each manuscript moves through the double-blind review process. Guest editors should guide authors in making timely and complete revisions based on the comments of peer-reviewers. Guest editors also may wish to suggest possible reviewers for individual papers.

If a paper is not accepted for publication based on the review process, then it will *not* be included in the special issue. If several papers are not accepted after peer-review, then *Africa Today* editors will discuss with the guest editor(s) whether the accepted papers can be published as a special issue. If not, then the accepted articles will appear as individual articles in a future open issue, if authors agree.

**Processing articles accepted for publication in *Africa Today***

Once papers have been accepted for publication, guest editors assist the editorial staff in receiving information from authors, such as Consent to Publish Forms, Contributor Information Forms, high-resolution images, artwork permissions for figures (if relevant), and other information.

Guest editors are responsible for writing an introduction. Guest editors also may ask a senior scholar to write an afterword for the special issue. Introductions and afterwords are reviewed by *Africa Today* editors, who may make suggestions for revision.

Guest editors work with the editorial staff and authors as the submissions move through the process of copyediting and proofing.

Guest editors are welcome to promote the special issue in relevant scholarly forums, after publication of the special issue, in consultation with *Africa Today* editors and Indiana University Press.
Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

*Africa Today (AT)* is dedicated to following best practices on ethical matters, errors, and retractions. The prevention of publication malpractice is one of the important responsibilities of the editorial board. Any kind of unethical behavior is not acceptable, and *AT* does not tolerate plagiarism in any form. Authors submitting articles to *AT* affirm that manuscript contents are original.

The following duties outlined for editors, authors, and reviewers are based on the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) guidelines, which are in turn based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Code of Conduct for Journal Editors. Editors, authors, and reviewers will also adhere to the AACE and Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) submission guideline policies and the COPE International Standards for Authors.

**Duties of Editors**

*Publication Decisions*: Based on the review report of the editorial review board, the editor can accept, reject, or request modifications to the manuscript.

*Review of Manuscripts*: Each editor must ensure that each manuscript is initially evaluated by the editor for originality. Following desk review, the manuscript will be sent out for blind peer review, which the editors will use to determine whether to accept, reject, or request revisions for the manuscript.

*Fair Review*: The editors must ensure that each manuscript received by *AT* is reviewed for its intellectual content without regard to sex, gender, race, religion, citizenship, etc. of the authors.

*Confidentiality*: The editors must ensure that information regarding manuscripts submitted by the authors is kept confidential.

*Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest*: The editors of *AT* will not use unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript for their own research without written consent of the author.
Duties of Authors

Reporting Standards: Authors should present an accurate account of their original research as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Manuscripts will follow the submission guidelines of the journal.

Originality: Authors must ensure that they have written entirely original work.

Multiple, Redundant, or Concurrent Publications: Authors should not submit the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently. It is also expected that the author will not publish redundant manuscripts or manuscripts describing the same research in more than one journal.

Acknowledgement of Sources: Authors should acknowledge all sources of data used in the research and cite publications that have been influential in the research work.

Authorship of the Paper: Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to conception, design, execution or interpretation of the reported study. Others who have made significant contribution must be listed as co-authors. Authors also ensure that all the authors have seen and agreed to the submitted version of the manuscript and their inclusion of names as co-authors.

Data Access and Retention: Authors should provide raw data related to their manuscript for editorial review and must retain such data.

Fundamental Errors in Published Works: If at any point of time, the author(s) discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in submitted manuscript, then the error or inaccuracy must be reported to the editor.

Duties of Reviewers

Confidentiality: Information regarding manuscripts submitted by authors should be kept confidential and be treated as privileged information.

Acknowledgement of Sources: Manuscript reviewers must ensure that authors have acknowledged all sources of data used in the research. Any kind of similarity or overlap between the manuscripts under consideration or with any other published paper of which reviewer has personal knowledge must be immediately brought to the editor's notice.

Standards of Objectivity: Review of submitted manuscripts must be done objectively and the reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

Promptness: In the event that a reviewer feels it is not possible for him/her to complete review of manuscript within stipulated time then this information must be communicated to the editor, so that the manuscript could be sent to another reviewer.
Call for Cover Art

_Africa Today_ seeks artwork, in any medium, for use on the covers of upcoming journal issues. We publish four issues per year.

**Specifications**

The art must be related to Africa. That is, it should be representative of (or intervene in) African arts, culture, society, geography, music, history, etc.

Artwork can be photographed and reproduced for publication in print and digital formats.

Artwork is by African artists, especially those based on the African continent, but we will also consider work by artists located outside of Africa and by non-African artists.

Artwork should be original and unpublished.

Artist retains copyright.

If selected for publication, artwork must be provided in TIFF or JPEG. Resolution must be 300 dpi at six-inches wide.

Artwork will be accompanied by a brief explanation written by the artist and may include the artist’s contact information.

As a non-profit academic journal, we cannot offer monetary remuneration, but we can offer you visibility and recognition in the journal.

**Contact**

If interested, please contact _Africa Today_’s managing editor: afrtoday@indiana.edu with the subject line “Artwork for the Cover of Africa Today.”

Please describe the type of art and your typical subject matter, and send low-res samples or provide a link to an online portfolio.
The Editorial Board

The editorial home of *Africa Today* is the African Studies Program in the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University Bloomington.

**2019–2020**

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Interdisciplinary research and diverse perspectives on social, cultural, and political issues in Africa.

Africa Today publishes peer-reviewed, scholarly articles and book reviews in a broad range of academic disciplines on topics related to contemporary Africa. We seek to be a venue for interdisciplinary approaches, diverse perspectives, and original research in the humanities and social sciences. This includes work on social, cultural, political, historical, and economic subjects. Recent special issues have been on topics such as the future of African artistic practices, the socio-cultural life of bus stations in Africa, and family-based health care in Ghana. Africa Today has been on the forefront of African Studies research since 1954.

African Studies, Cultures, Diasporas, History, Politics, Anthropology, Art History, Geography, Literature, Religion, Sociology, Postcolonial

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