Africa since 1800

AFRC076, AFST 076, HIST 076
University of Pennsylvania
Summer 2017 - Session II
MW 1:15-5:15

[SUBJECT TO REVISION]

Instructor
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Course Description

This course introduces students to the main currents of African history from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. We will examine changes and continuities across 200 years of history, from the closing of the Atlantic slave trade to the wave of "democratization" in the 1990s.

Our topics will include state building and political organization; the growth of cities and trade networks; the spread of Islam and Christianity; the imposition of European colonial rule and forms of African resistance and accommodation; forced labor, colonial political economies and resource extraction; the process of decolonization and the
emergence of African nationalist movements and political parties; and the struggles of independence.

We will pursue these themes in a variety of settings, from the Nile Valley to the East African Coast, and from southern African to the Western Sahel, meeting many African artists, intellectuals, and political figures along the way. In the process, students will become acquainted with different methods of historical research and be asked to think about history alongside contemporary representations of the continent.

Format

Due to the compressed nature of the summer session, this class will necessarily be a collective endeavor. Our meetings will consist of four components: 1) A broad, thematic lecture given by the instructor, 2) A discussion of shared readings, 3) Student-led discussions of regionally focused readings related to the day’s theme, and 4) Screenings of relevant films (sometimes).

At the outset of the course, we will form teams responsible for different regions of the continent (shared, common readings and regionally specific readings are designated in the syllabus). This course will move quickly over many areas and topics, and you and your peers will therefore be responsible for educating one another on your specific region of the continent.

Texts for Purchase

Frederick Cooper, Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).


*All readings not for purchase from Penn Book Center will be available on Canvas.

Assignments (with percentage of overall grade)

Article Presentations (20%)
Because this is a collaborative course, presenting and leading discussions around your regionally specific readings will be a key component of your overall grade. Each student group will do this several times over the course of the summer.

Map Quiz (5%)
Week 2 will open with a test of your geographic knowledge of the continent. You will be given a blank map with present-day national boundaries and asked to fill in the names of of African countries.
**Source Response (10%)**
How do historians reconstruct the past and what kinds of evidence do they use to support their claims? This two-page assigned will be an opportunity to reflect on the mechanics of historical practice through documents, images and other forms of data.

**Film Response (10%)**
We will supplement our readings with a few film screenings, and you will be asked to write a 2-page response paper on the film of your choice.

**Participation (15%)**
Distinct from the grade you will be given for presentations of materials dealing with your region of the continent, this grade reflects your contributions to our general discussions and your engagement with your peers.

**Mid-term (20%)**
An in-class exam that will involve IDs and short essays. You will be required to answer a certain number of questions outside of your own regional expertise. Learning from your peers is essential to succeeding in this course.

**Final Essay (20%)**
This 8-10 page essay will be based on readings over the course of the summer, as well as a few of your own choosing (with guidance from me). Students will present oral versions of their essays in our final class meeting.

Sample Question: In an influential article written in the early years of independence, the Nigerian historian J.F. Ade Ajayi called colonialism "an episode" in African history: "To argue that the major political movements in African history were not all necessarily inspired by European activities is not to deny the external factors that have had an important impact on African history. The interrelationship of internal and external factors will for a long time arouse debate." Enter that debate with examples drawn from several regions of the continent.

**Academic Integrity**
Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity and plagiarism policies on all assignments. If you have questions, please consult Penn's website on academic integrity: [http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/](http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/).

**Students with Disabilities:**
If you are a student with a disability or disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability, please contact Penn's Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) at 215 573-9235 within the first week of class, or immediately upon onset of disability, to speak with a disability specialist. If you are determined eligible for reasonable accommodations, please meet with your disability specialist so they can arrange to have your accommodation letter sent to me, and we will discuss your needs for this course. For more information, please visit: [http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/) or call (215) 573-9235.
Course Schedule

Mon. July 3 - Thinking about Africa

**Common Reading:** A. Adu Boahen, "The Eve of the Colonial Conquest and Occupation," ch. 1 in African Perspectives on Colonialism, pp. 1-26.

Mon. July 10 - Global Markets and the Slave Trade's Gradual Decline *Map Quiz*
**Common Reading:** Walter Rodney, "Europe and the Roots of African Underdevelopment—to 1885," ch. IV in How Europe Underdeveloped Africa
**Northeast Africa:** Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, "Slavery and Labor in Precolonial Sudan,"
Wed. July 12 - European Conquest

**Common Reading:** John Lonsdale, "The European Scramble and Conquest in African History" in *Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 6.


M: July 17 - Life & Politics Under Colonialism

**Common Reading:** Mahmood Mamdani, "Decentralized Despotism," ch. 2 in *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, pp. 37-61.


W: July 19 - Labor & Slavery's Gradual Decline?


**West Africa:** Martin A. Klein, "Slavery and Emancipation in French West Africa," in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and*


July 24 - Africa and the World Wars

*Midterm in class*

*Film: Camp de Thiaroye* (Dir. Ousmane Sembène and Thierno Faty Sow, Senegal, 1988)

July 26 - The Time of Politics - Incipient Nationalisms


Frederick Cooper, "Citizenship, self-government, and development: the possibilities of the post-war moment," ch. 3 in Africa since 1940.

Frederick Cooper, "Ending empire and imagining the future," ch. 4 in Africa since 1940.


Southern Africa: Reading on the African National Congress TBA
July 31 - Days of Independence?

**Common Reading:** Frederick Cooper, "Development and disappointment: social and economic change in an unequal world, 1945-2000," ch. 5 in *Africa since 1940.*

Frederick Cooper, "The late decolonizations: southern Africa 1975, 1979, 1994," ch. 6 in *Africa since 1800.*


*Film: Indepêndencia* (Dir. Mario Bastos, Angola, 2015)

August 2 - Final Essay Presentations