History 376  History of Africa to 1800  Mr. Vansina

GENERAL: Readings:

Except for the first week, reading assignments should be done the week before the classes to which they pertain. Graduate students have additional assigned readings.

Credits:

4 credits with a midterm paper, three credits with a midterm exam (take-home).

Examinations:

6 weeks optional, except for sophomores who must take it - written; identifications and one essay question, 20%. 12 weeks: written and essay questions, or paper or log, 40%. "Log" refers to the practice of keeping a notebook about the course and the readings, week by week, including personal reflections about the questions discussed. The log is submitted week 12. Final: essay questions. A final paper is optional, replacing the exam, but students should take at least one exam, whether 12 week or final.

OUTLINE: The main themes of the course are outlined in the first lecture. Slides are used to familiarize the audience with visual realities that are foreign to them. Some may be used on the 6 week exam. Moreover, students are advised to look at picture books and to consult atlases. J.F.A. Ajayi, M. Crowder, Historical Atlas of Africa, London, 1985, is the standard historical atlas.

BACKGROUND REFERENCE:

The following multivolume series are standard:

The Cambridge History of Africa, vols. 2-5
The UNESCO General History of Africa, vols. 1, 2, 4 (so far)
The Cambridge History of Islam

TEXTS:

Required: Paperbacks in Bookshops and on reserve

Recommended: Graduate Reading Room Reserve

The UNESCO General History of Africa, vol. 4, 1984

SYLLABUS:

I. Beginnings

Week 1 - Introduction

Sep. 3 Geography and History
Sep. 5 History and Africa
Reading: "Africa" entry in Macropaedia of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. See reference section of all libraries.

Week 2 - The Shaping of Africa's Main Cultural Traditions

Sep. 8 Birth of an Oikoumene
Sep. 10 Cities and Pioneering Migrations

II. Cultural Traditions and Societies: c. 600-c. 1500

Week 3 - Islam

Sep. 15 Islam, a New Universal Religion
Sep. 17 The Spread of Islam in Africa to c. 1200
Reading: H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism

Week 4 - Varieties of Feudal States

Sep. 22 Feudal Egypt
Sep. 24 Medieval Ethiopia
Reading: UNESCO History, vol. 4, chapters 15, 17

Week 5 - Caliphs and Caravans

Sep. 29 Morocco
Oct. 1 The Trans-Saharan Trade
Reading: C., 74-116; Horizon History of Africa, 177-216

Week 6 - West African Societies

Oct. 6 Mali
Oct. 8 Decentralized Systems
Oct. 10 Six-weeks exam
Reading: D.T. Niane, Sundiata

Week 7 - Differentiation in Eastern and Southern Africa

Oct. 13 On the Shores of the Indian Ocean
Oct. 15 Southern Africa
Reading: D. Nurse, T. Spear, The Swahili, relevant portions
Week 8 - Food and Worship

Oct. 20 African Ways of Making a Living
Oct. 22 Regional African Religions
Reading: To be assigned later.

III. Africa in the Era of the European World-Economy

Week 9 - The Ottomans

Oct. 27 Regencies in Barbary
Oct. 29 Upheavals in the Horn
Reading: C., 180-212.

Week 10 - The Inhuman Trade

Nov. 3 The Slave Trade
Nov. 7 Its Organisation and Its Impact

Week 11 - West Africa

Nov. 10 Revolts in the Sahel and Their Idiom
Nov. 12 New Coastal Societies
Reading: M.D. McLeod, The Asante

Week 12 - Central Africa to 1700

Nov. 17 Signs of the Leopard
Nov. 19 Kongo and Angola
Reading: C., 249-276.

Week 13 - Central Africa, 1700-1850

Nov. 24 The Great River Trade
Nov. 26 Lunda and the Slave Trade
Distribution of Take-Home Exam
Nov. 27 Thanksgiving
Reading: C., 249-276.

Week 14 - Herdsmen and Monarchs

Dec. 1 The Great Lakes Kingdoms
Return examinations
Dec. 3 Pastoral Ways of Life
Dec. 5 The Lands of the Indian Ocean
Reading: C., 117-178

Week 15 - Southern Africa

Dec. 8 South of the Zambezi
Dec. 10 Europeans at the Cape
Reading: C., 277-303
REQUIRED READING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:

In addition to the readings mentioned, graduate students will read the relevant portions of the CAMBRIDGE and UNESCO histories especially for northern Africa, the Horn and West Africa as well as the following:

Week 1 - J. Vansina, "Western Bantu Expansion", JAH, 1984, 129-145
Week 2 - Cambridge History of Islam, vol. 1a, chapters 2 and 3
Week 9 - J.B. Wolf, The Barbary Coast, New York, 1979
Week 10 - P. Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery, Cambridge, 1983

Graduate students are encouraged to keep a log comparing divergent points of view in their readings with their own opinions. This can replace their final examination. For details consult the instructor.