From Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to the current war in Eastern Congo, Equatorial Africa stands in common Western knowledge as the soft-belly of the Continent: a macro-region of long-standing ethnic rivalries, defeated modernity and collapsing nations. Classic scholarship on Equatorial Africa has emphasized explanations coming from a submission/domination perspective: submission of local societies to a daunting environment; submission of ancient polities to the colonial system; and more recently, domination of civil society by warlords and autocratic regimes.

This lecture will ask you to go beyond this cliché imagery, and to explore the complex history of this region. Recent historiography has recovered the existence of an Equatorial Africa civilization that has survived and innovated for several millennia, while successfully confronting pressures from the Atlantic after 1500. After the colonial conquest at the end of the 19th century, we know better how ordinary people resisted the colonial project, adapted to the challenges of every-day life, and invented the features of modern-times in multiple and intricate ways. Today, at a time of wars and deteriorating economic conditions, flourishing religious movements and vivid popular culture place Equatorial Africa among the most innovative areas of the African continent.

Cross Shaped Currencies, Kongo 16th c.

**Grading:**
- MAP QUIZ 5%
- Take Home Essay on Kongolesse St Anthony (4-page): 20%
- MID TERM EXAM (weeks 1-5): 20%
- Short Take-Home Essay on Explorers and Fang (3-page): 15%
- Take Home Essay on Cloth (6-page): 20%
- FINAL EXAM (weeks 10-16): 20%
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- Map Quiz. Due in class on 02/01. (5%)

- Take Home Essay on The Kongoese St-Anthony (four-page, min. 1,000 words, max. 1,200 words) [NB: all essays are double-spaced]. Instructions given in class ahead of time. Due in class on 02/08. (20%)

- MID TERM on course material and readings for weeks 1-5. 02/24 (20%)

- Take Home Essay on primary sources on Fang. Write a three-page essay (min. 750 words-max. 1000 words) comparing either one or BOTH primary sources (Du Chaillu and Milligan) and their views on the Fang. Due in class on 03/10. (15%)

- Take Home Essay on History of Cloth. Write a six-page essay (min. 1,500 words-max. 1,800 words, double-spaced) on the history and historiography of cloth in equatorial Africa. The essay consists in a critical discussion about the long-term history of the production and uses of cloth in Equatorial Africa. You will use and compare three scholarly articles (see list below in reading packet). Your essay should not merely summarize the articles. Instead, it should analyze and discuss the production and uses of cloth in Equatorial Africa over the long term. It should also explain how different authors make different sense of this history, and write it from various perspectives. This will encourage you to adopt a critical eye on “real” events, and on history as an argumentative narrative making sense of the past. A guideline sheet will be handed out ahead of time. Due in class on 03/24 (20%)

- FINAL EXAM on course material and readings for weeks 10-16. (20%)

2) CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students are required to attend all lectures. In addition, there will be periodic discussion sessions during which you will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings and to actively participate in discussion. Both attendance and participation in discussions will be noted and will be taken into account in calculating your final grade.

3) GRADUATE STUDENTS should talk to me early in the semester for specific assignments.

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Course Regulations

- Attendance is mandatory. You can miss two classes during the semester-- but not one that features an important class-discussion (in bold in the schedule). Three unexcused absences will lower your grade. Four unexcused absences will result in a failing (F) grade.

- No make-ups for being absent, late, or late in turning assignments. Missed exams will only be excused with doctor’s notes or other formal documents.

- Late research papers will be marked down a grade (e.g.: from a “B” to a “C”) for each school day missed, and will not be accepted after three school days after the due date (thus marked “F”). Papers or exams put under my office door will not be graded. Papers
turned late can be put in my mailbox ONLY if signed, dated and timed by administrator at History Department front desk.

- The length of research papers is mandatory. Any paper more than ½ page shorter or longer than the assigned number of pages will be marked down. The police of characters should be no larger than 12, and the margins no wider than 1” (top and bottom), and 1.2” (left and right).

- Written assignments are individual. Collaborative work allowed during the preparation, but not during writing. If you are unsure about what is considered plagiarism, check with me.

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Readings:
I have collected articles and book chapters and made them available in a reading packet, for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center, Hum. 1650.

The following books are required and available at the University Book Store. They are also on reserve at Helen C. White. Try and bring readings in class for the appropriate week.


*Also in the Reading Packet: Articles for the Essay on the History of Cloth:*

Luba Seat, 18\(^{th}\) c.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction
   01/18  Mapping Equatorial Africa by 1000
   01/20  Bantu Migrations

Reading packet: Jan Vansina, The Land and Its Settlement, 35-69
                Start on The Kongolese St Anthony [34pp]

Week 2. Social Diversity 1000/1500
   01/25  Farmers and Hunters-Gatherers (Pygmies)
   01/27  The Rise of the Kongo Kingdom

Reading Packet: Roy Grinker, Houses in the Rainforest, 1-9, 18-34, & 138-146 [skip 35-52]
                Start on The Kongolese St Anthony [34 pp]

Week 3. The Kongo Kingdom
   02/01  Contact with the Portuguese ***MAP QUIZ due in class***
   02/03  NO CLASS (Conference at U. of Florida)

Reading: John Thornton, Kongolese St Anthony, all book [274 pp]

Week 4. Production of Slaves: 1600-1800
   02/08  Discussion on Kongolese St Anthony ***4-page PAPER DUE on Kongolese St Anthony***
   02/10  The Atlantic Trade and the Production of Slaves

Readings packet: Joseph Miller, Way of Death, 105-139 [34 pp]

Week 5. Equatorial Africa and the Atlantic World
   02/15  Discussion on Slavery -- Caravans in the Interior
   02/17  American Imports and Social Changes

Reading packet: P. Martin “Family Strategies”
                Look at Map on Empires and Kingdoms 1400-1800 [21 pp]

Week 6. Caravans and Creole Societies 1700-1885
   02/22  No Class [prepare for the mid-term]
   02/24  ***MID TERM EXAM*** [0 pp]

Week 7. Transitions in the 19th Century
   03/01  Luanda and Benguela
   03/03  Transition in the Congo
Reading Packet: David Birmingham: “Slave City: Luanda Through German Eyes” 
Jan Vansina, chap 1, 10-34 [36 pp]

**Week 8. Local Societies Through the Eyes of Explorers (Primary Sources)**
03/08 The Fang: Farmers, Migrants, and Warriors
03/10 Explorers + Discussion ***3-PAGE ESSAY ON PRIMARY SOURCES DUE IN CLASS***

Reading Packet: J. Fernandez, Narratives of Fang-European Contacts, 1840-1910, 29-48

**Primary Sources:**
Paul B. Du Chaillu, Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa (1861), 102-111 & 118-129

**Week 9. Spring Recess (March 12-March 20)**

**Week 10. The Colonial Conquest**
03/22 How Did It Happen?
03/24 Early Violence and Resistance ***6-PAGE ESSAY ON CLOTH DUE IN CLASS***

Reading: Vansina, chapters 2 & 3, 35-85 [50 pp]

**Week 11. Nodes of Power**
03/29 Land, Labor and Chiefs
03/31 Ctd + Discussion on Conquest

Reading: Vansina: chap 4, 5 & 8, 86-149 & 214-243 [82 pp]

**Week 12. Ideological and Spiritual Encounters**
04/05 Missions, Cannibalism, and the Fang
04/07 Independent Churches and Syncretic Cults (Bwiti)

Reading: James Fernandez, Reinterpretations of Mission & Bwiti Chapel, 271-87 & 371-412
Vansina, chap 9 & 10, 244-297 [110 pp]

**Week 13. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: I**
04/12 Struggles in the City
04/14 New Elites: Leon Mba

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chap. 2, 3 & 4, 45-126 [81 pp]
Week 14. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: II
04/19 Women and Gender roles
04/21 Modern Life

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chap. 5 & 6, 127-173
          Vansina, chap. 11, 298-324 [72 pp]

Week 15. Independence and Beyond, 1950s-2000s
04/26 Discussion on Gender - Zaire/DRC: Case Study on Decolonization
04/28 Ctd

Reading: Vansina, chap 6 & 7, 150-213 [63 pp]

***PLEASE FILL UP EVALUATION FOR THE COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR ONLINE***

Week 16. Conclusion
05/03 HIV-Aids
05/05 Conclusion [videos]

Reading: Lydia Mungherera,” “Noé Sebisaba,” “Christine Amisi,” in S. Nolen, 28:
          Stories of AIDS in Africa, 72-112 [40 pp]

****FINAL EXAM 05/11/2011, 10:05 am-12:05 pm****

Chéri Samba, Les amoureux dépassés, acrylic, 1988