

History 377: History of Africa, 1500-1870

Fall 2007

MWF 9.55-10.50

1641 Humanities

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Office Hours: Monday, 12-2.30

5114 Humanities

Welcome to History 377. The course provides a survey of the cultural and social history of Africa south of the Sahara from approximately 1500-1870. Because there is so much to learn about Africa and Africans during this period, we cannot strive for exhaustive coverage. However, we will visit almost every major historical region of Africa at least once during the semester and will focus on several important themes in the history of the continent. The first part of the course focuses on the historical development of African societies prior to the rise of the Atlantic slave trade. We will then explore the origins of the slave trade and its impact on Africa. Finally, we will complete the course by examining the expansion of European influence in the period leading up to the formal establishment of colonial rule.

Required Readings:

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and are also on reserve at Helen C. White:

Robert O. Collins and James M. Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*

D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*

Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*

John Thornton, *The Kongoese Saint Anthony*

David Northrup, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*

I have also collected a set of readings for you to purchase from the copy center in the Humanities building (room 1650) and placed readings on reserve at Helen C. White. The designation (cp) next to a reading indicates course packet.

ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION:

- 1) Take-home midterm I: 25%
- 2) Take-home midterm II: 25%
- 3) Take-home final: 25%
- 4) Participation in discussion sections and map quiz: 25%

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Week 1 (Sep. 3-7)

9/5 Introduction to Course

9/7 Knowing Africa: Preconception and Misconceptions

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa" (cp)

Week 2 (Sep. 10-14)

9/10 Mapping Africa: Geography, Language, and Environment

Collins and Burns, chapter 1

9/12 Ideals of Social Organization

Collins and Burns, chapter 3

9/14 Trans-Saharan Trade and the Spread of Islam in West Africa

Collins and Burns, pp.78-83

Donald Robinson, "The Islamization of Africa" and "The Africanization of Islam" (cp)

Week 3 (Sep. 17-21)

9/17 Empire and Oral Traditions: Ancient Mali

Collins and Burns, pp.83-87

Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, vii-47

9/19 The Road to Timbuktu: Songhay

Collins and Burns, pp.87-89

Niane, *Sundiata*, 47-84

9/21 Complex Societies without Political Centralization: The Arts of Wealth in People in the Inner Congo Basin

Jan Vansina, "The Peoples of the Forest" (cp)

Week 4 (Sep. 24-28)

9/24 Ideology, and Empire: The Luba Kingdom

Collins and Burns, pp.142-150

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/luba/hd_luba.htm

(make sure to view images of artwork and to read the descriptions)

9/26 Early Great Lakes History and the Chwezi Kubandwa Revolution

Collins and Burns, chapter 8

9/28 Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Precolonial Rwanda

Jan Vansina, "Central Rwanda on the Eve of the Emergence of the Kingdom" (cp)

Week 5 (Oct. 1-5)

10/1 Land and Power in Buganda

Holly Hanson, "Creating Relationships with Gifts of Land: Lineages, Chiefs, and Royals Interact to Make the State, ca.900-ca. 1700" (cp)

10/3 The Rise of Swahili Culture and the Classical Age of Swahili City-States

Collins and Burns, chapter 7

10/5 Film: "The Swahili Coast"

Week 6 (Oct. 8-12)

10/8 Southeastern Africa and the Zimbabwe Plateau

Collins and Burns, chapter 11

10/10 Current Events I

TBA

Hand out exam

10/12 No class: work on exams

Week 7 (Oct. 15-19)

10/15 The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Northrup, Part I: Why Were Africans Enslaved?
Collins and Burns, 213-223 (recommended)

Exam due in class

10/17 What is Slavery?: Inequality and Dependency in Africa

Collins and Burns, chapter 14

10/19 No class: African Studies Association Conference

Week 8 (Oct. 22-26)

10/22 Transformations in Slavery During the Era of the Transatlantic
Slave Trade

Paul Lovejoy, "Africa and Slavery" (cp)
Northrup, pp.52-63

10/24 Oyo, Benin, and Dahomey

Sparks, Prologue and chapters 1-2

10/26 The Niger Delta: Ijo and Igbo

Sparks, chapters 3-4

Week 9 (Oct. 29-Nov. 2)

10/29 Asante

Sparks, chapters 5-6

11/31 Jihads of West Africa

No reading

11/2 The Kingdom of Kongo in Historical Perspective

Collins and Burns, chapter 12

Thornton, Introduction and chapters 1-2

Week 10 (Nov. 5-9)

11/5 The Slave Trade in West-Central Africa

Thornton, chapters 3-4

11/7 Anna Njinga and the Colony of Angola

Thornton, chapters 5-6

11/9 Kongolese Legacies in the New World

Thornton, chapters 7-9

Week 11 (Nov. 12-16)

11/12 Abolition, the Slow Death of Slavery, and Legitimate Trade in the
19th Century

Northrup, Part VI: Abolition

11/14 The Atlantic Slave Trade and African History

Northrup, pp.103-131, 134-149

Hand out exam

11/16 No Class: work on exams

Week 12 (Nov. 19-23)

11/19 The Indian Ocean Slave Trade

Collins and Burns, pp.243-246

Exam due in class

11/21 Film: The Slave Kingdoms

Lansiné Kaba, "The Atlantic Slave Trade Was Not a "Black on-Black Holocaust" (cp)

11/23 Thanksgiving

Week 13 (Nov.26-30)

11/25 The Emergence of Plantation Economies

No reading (review Kaba article)

11/28 South Africa: The Arrival of the Dutch

Collins and Burns, chapter 19

11/30 The Zulu and the Mfecane

Collins and Burns, review 285-87

Carolyn Hamilton, "Painted Chests, Academic Body Servants, and Visions of Modern Airlines: Shaka in Contemporary Discourse" (cp)

Week 14 (Dec. 3-7)

12/3 European Expansion in South Africa

Herman Giliomee, "The Eastern Frontier Cauldron" (cp)

12/5 Film: Shaka Zulu

Carolyn Hamilton, "Shaka as Metaphor, Memory, and History in Apartheid South Africa" (cp)

12/7 Prelude to Conquest

Collins and Burns, chapter 17

Week 15 (Dec. 10-14)

12/10 The Scramble for Africa

Collins and Burns, chapter 18

12/12 Current Events II

TBA

12/14 Review

Hand out final exam

Final due Tuesday, December 18 at 2 p.m.