

## History 377: History of Africa, 1500-1870

Fall 2009  
MWF 11.00-11.55  
1131 Humanities  
TA: Sean Bloch

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Office Hours: Monday, 1.00-2.30  
5115 Humanities



**Mansa Musa, King of Mali**

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 sub-Saharan 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 and Indian Ocean slave trades. We will then explore the origins of the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on Africa. Finally, we will complete the course by examining the momentous transformations in sub-Saharan Africa during "the long 19<sup>th</sup> century," including the dramatic growth of the Indian Ocean slave trade, the establishment of European settlements in South Africa, and the expansion of European influence in other parts of the continent during 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:

Lisa A. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade*

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

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*

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 College Library. The designation (cp) next to a reading indicates course packet.

### **Recommended Readings:**

I have not assigned a textbook for this course. However, for those interested in reading a general overview of African history, please see Robert O. Collins and James M. Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*. I have placed a copy of this textbook on reserve at College Library.

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### **ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION:**

- 1) Essay analyzing *Sundiata* and "Keita: The Heritage of a Griot": 10%
- 2) Take-home midterm I: 20%
- 3) Take-home midterm II: 20%
- 4) Take-home final: 25%
- 5) Participation in discussion sections and map quiz: 25%

#### Academic Honesty

In keeping with the policy of this university, plagiarism (using other people's thoughts or words without acknowledging the source) is unacceptable. *All sources, including internet sources, MUST be cited in your written work.* A first offense will result in a report submitted to the Dean of Students and a failing grade on the paper in question.

Knowing how or when to cite can be confusing; if you are having trouble, rather than living in fear of inadvertent plagiarism please come discuss it with me or the TA during office hours, or seek advice from the writing center. You may also find the following link helpful: [www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html).

For a guide on how to properly cite sources, please consult the following website: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

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## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Week 1 (Sep. 2-4)**

9/2 Introduction to Course

9/4 Knowing Africa: Preconceptions and Misconceptions

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

#### **Week 2 (Sep. 7-11)**

9/7 No class: Labor Day

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

9/11 Ideals of Social Organization

Reading: R. Collins and J. Burns, "The Historical Geography of Africa" (cp)  
J. McCall, "Social Organization in Africa" (cp)

### PART ONE: POLITICAL COMPLEXITY AND EARLY AFRICAN HISTORY

#### **Week 3 (Sep. 14-18)**

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

9/16 Empires and Oral Traditions: Ancient Mali

9/18 Film: "Keita: The Heritage of a Griot"

Reading: D. Robinson, "The Islamization of Africa" and "The Africanization of Islam" (cp)  
D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*

#### **Week 4 (Sep. 21-25)**

9/21 The Road to Timbuktu: Songhay

9/23 The Arts of Wealth in People in the Inner Congo Basin

9/25 Ideology and Empire: The Luba Kingdom

#### **Hand out paper topics**

Reading: J. Guyer and S. E. Belinga, "Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge: Accumulation and Composition in Equatorial Africa" (cp)

#### **Week 5 (Sep. 28-Oct. 2)**

9/28 No Class: work on papers

9/30 Early Great Lakes History and the Chwezi Kubandwa Revolution

#### **Papers due in class**

10/2 Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Precolonial Rwanda

Reading: J. Vansina, "Central Rwanda on the Eve of the Emergence of the Kingdom" (cp)

#### **Week 6 (Oct. 5-9)**

10/5 Land and Power in Buganda

10/7 Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa

10/9 The Rise of Swahili Culture and the Classical Age of Swahili City-States

#### Reading:

N. Kodesh, "Networks of Knowledge: Clanship and Collective Well-Being in Buganda" (cp)

M. Horton and J. Middleton, "The Swahili Coast" (cp)

Ibn Battuta, "A visit to Zeila, Mogadishu, Mombassa and Kilwa in 1331"

**Week 7 (Oct. 12-16)**

10/12 Southeastern Africa and the Zimbabwe Plateau

10/14 Current events

**Hand out exams**

10/16 No Class: work on exams

Reading: TBA

PART TWO: THE TRANATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

**Week 8 (Oct. 19-23)**

10/19 The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade

**Exams due in class**

10/21 What is Slavery? Inequality and Dependence in Africa

10/23 Transformations in Slavery During the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Reading: L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, "Introduction" and chapters 1-2

**Week 9 (Oct. 26-30)**

10/26 Oyo, Benin, and Dahomey

10/28 The Niger Delta: Ijo and Igbo

10/30 Asante

Reading: S. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, "Introduction" and chapters 1-3

**Week 10 (Nov. 2-6)**

11/2 Kongo and Angola

11/4 The Slave Trade in West-Central Africa

11/6 The Atlantic Slave Trade and Africa History

Reading: S. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, chapters 4-7

PART THREE: REVOLUTIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE LONG 19<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY

**Week 11 (Nov. 9-13)**

11/9 Abolition, the Slow Death of Slavery, and Legitimate Trade in the 19  
Century

11/11 The Jihads of West Africa

**Hand out exam**

11/13 No class: work on exams

Reading: L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, chapter 4

**Week 12 (Nov. 16-20)**

11/16 The Indian Ocean Slave Trade

**Exams due in class**

11/18 The Emergence of Plantation Economies in East Africa

11/20 No class: African Studies Association Meeting

Reading: J. Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes" (cp)

**Week 13 (Nov. 23-27)**

11/23 Film: The Slave Kingdoms

11/25 Globalization and East Africa

11/27 Thanksgiving Break

Reading: L. Kaba, "The Atlantic Slave Trade Was Not a "Black on-Black Holocaust" (cp)  
J. Prestholdt, "Picturesque Contradictions" (cp)

**Week 14 (Nov. 30-Dec. 4)**

11/30 South Africa: The Arrival of the Dutch

12/2 The Zulu and the Mfecane

12/4 European Expansion in South Africa

Reading: Iris Berger, "Bitter Almond Hedges: Colonization, Servitude, and Slavery"

**Week 15 (Dec. 7-11)**

12/7 Diamonds and Gold: The Making of Modern South Africa

12/9 Prelude to Conquest

12/11 The Scramble for Africa

Reading: Patrick Harries, "Kimberley: The Cradle of a New Working Class" (cp)  
Tim Keegan, "The Life Story of Lucas Nqandela" (cp)

**Week 16 (Dec. 15)**

12/15 Review

**Hand out final exam. Final exam due on Monday, December 21 by 1:00 pm**