

History 377: History of Africa, 1500-1870

Spring 2009
MWF 9.55-10.50
1641 Humanities
TA: Nikki Eggers

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Office Hours: Monday, 2-3.30
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 and Indian Ocean slave trades. We will then explore the origins of the slave trades and their impact on Africa. Finally, we will complete the course by examining 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*
Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*
Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*

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.

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 (Jan. 19-23)

1/21 Introduction to Course

1/23 Knowing Africa: Preconceptions and Misconceptions

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

Week 2 (Jan. 26-30)

1/26 Mapping Africa: Geography, Language, and Environment

R. Collins and J. Burns, "The Historical Geography of Africa" (cp)

1/28 Ideals of Social Organization

J. McCall, "Social Organization in Africa"

1/30 Political Complexity and African History

P. Bohanan and P. Curtin, "African Politics and Courts" (cp)

Week 3 (Feb. 2-6)

2/2 Trans-Saharan Trade and the Spread of Islam in West Africa

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

2/4 Empire and Oral Traditions: Ancient Mali

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

2/6 The Road to Timbuktu: Songhay

D.T. Niane, *Sundiata*, 47-84

Week 4 (Feb. 9-13)

2/9 Complex Societies without Political Centralization: The Arts of Wealth in People in the Inner Congo Basin

J. Vansina, "The Peoples of the Forest" (cp)

2/11 Ideology and Empire: The Luba Kingdom

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/luba/hd_luba.htm
(make sure to click on images of artwork and to read the descriptions)

2/13 Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ethi/hd_ethi.htm
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/acet/hd_acet.htm
(make sure to click on images of artwork and to read the descriptions)

Week 5 (Feb. 16-20)

2/16 Early Great Lakes History and the Chwezi Kubandwa Revolution

No reading

2/18 Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Precolonial Rwanda

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

2/20 Land and Power in Buganda

N. Kodesh, "Networks of Knowledge" (cp)

Week 6 (Feb. 23-27)

2/23 The Rise of Swahili Culture and the Classical Age of Swahili City-States

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

2/25 Southeastern Africa and the Zimbabwe Plateau

M. Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City" (cp)

Hand out exam

2/27 No class: work on exams

Week 7 (Mar. 2-6)

3/2 Current Events I

TBA

Exams due in class

3/4 The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, "Introduction"

3/6 What is Slavery?: Inequality and Dependency in Africa

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, ch. 1

Week 8 (Mar. 9-13)

3/9 Transformations in Slavery During the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, ch. 2

3/11 Oyo, Benin, and Dahomey

R. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*, Prologue and chs. 1-2

3/13 The Niger Delta: Ijo and Igbo

R. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*, chs. 3-4

Week 9 (Mar. 16-20) SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (Mar. 23-27)

3/23 Asante

R. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*, chs. 5-6

3/25 Jihads of West Africa

Finish reading R. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*

3/27 Kongo

J. Thornton and L. Heywood, "The Portuguese, Kongo, and Ndongo and the Origins of Atlantic Creole Culture to 1607," pp.49-72.

Week 11 (Mar. 30- April 3)

3/30 The Slave Trade in West-Central Africa

J. Miller, "West Central Africa"

4/1 Abolition, the Slow Death of Slavery, and Legitimate Trade in the 19th Century

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

4/3 The Atlantic Slave Trade and Africa History

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, "Epilogue"

Hand out exams

Week 12 (April. 6-10)

4/6 No Class: Work on Exams

4/8 Film: The Slave Kingdoms

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

Exams due in class

4/10 No Class: Passover/Good Friday

Week 13 (Apr. 13-17)

4/13 The African Diaspora

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, ch. 3

4/15 The Indian Ocean Slave Trade

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

4/17 The Emergence of Plantation Economies

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

Week 14 (Apr. 20-24)

4/20 Globalization and East Africa

J. Prestholdt, "Picturesque Contradictions" (cp)

4/22 South Africa: The Arrival of the Dutch

L. Thompson, "The White Invaders," 31-52 (cp)

4/24 The Zulu and the Mfecane

L. Thompson, "The White Invaders," 52-69 (cp)

Week 15 (Apr. 27-May 1)

4/27 European Expansion in South Africa

J. Peires, "The Central Beliefs of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing"
(cp)

4/29 Diamonds and Gold: The Making of Modern South Africa

S. Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, pp. 1-69

5/1 Prelude to Conquest

S. Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, pp. 70-120

Week 16 (May 4-8)

5/4 The Scramble for Africa

S. Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, pp. 121-172

5/6 Current Events II

TBA

5/8 Review

Hand out final exam

Final exams due Wednesday, May 13 by 1:00 pm