

History 444: History of East Africa

Spring 2015

TH 2:30-3:45 in 1217 Humanities

David Bresnahan
dpbresnahan@wisc.edu
Office: 5265 Humanities
Office Hours: Thursday 11-1

History 444 is an introductory survey to East African history. We will cover a range of topics and time periods, from the very distant past to issues debated by East African communities today. Our course will be divided into two units. The first half will cover global histories of East Africa until the nineteenth century. Using multiple case studies, we will examine the development of trade, Islam, and urbanism on the Swahili coast, as well as politically complex kingdoms in the Great Lakes region. The unit will conclude by studying the expansive long-distance trade networks that connected the Swahili coast, the Great Lakes, and even parts of central and southern Africa, to nearly every world region. The second unit will begin by considering gender, generational, and religious politics amidst social changes of the colonial and early-postcolonial era. Next, we will investigate western involvement in East Africa, including its impact on public health, sexual politics, and environmental policies. Finally, the course will conclude by looking at popular culture in contemporary East Africa.

Exams and Assignments:

Primary Source Analysis (10%): For the first primary source analysis, due **2/10** in class, students will analyze a selection from the famous Swahili text, *The Kilwa Chronicle* or “An Arabic History of Kilwa.” Further details will be provided in class. **3pp. double spaced.**

Book Review of Johanna Crane’s *Scrambling for Africa* (15%) due **4/14** in class. **4-5pp. double spaced.**

The Midterm (**25%**) and Final Exam (**30%**) will be take home essays. Students will receive essay prompts in class and have approximately one week to complete these assignments. The Midterm is due **3/12** in class and the Final Exam is due **5/13** via dropbox on Learn@UW.

Class Discussions:

One of the main advantages of our small class size is our ability to regularly discuss course readings in lecture. Students should complete all assigned readings prior to lecture and come to class prepared to talk about these readings. Participation in class discussions will count toward

20% of the final grade. If you are concerned about your participation grade, please feel free to contact me at any point during the semester.

Readings:

There are two required texts for History 444: Binyavanga Wainaina's memoir, *One Day I Will Write About this Place* and *Scrambling for Africa* by Johanna Crane. All other readings will be available on the course page on Learn@UW.

Course Evaluation:

Primary Source Analysis: 10%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Book Review: 15%

Final Exam: 30%

Participation: 20%

Course Outline:

Week 1:

T 1/20: Introduction to course and review of syllabus

TH 1/22: Studying African History: Images and Issues

Reading: B. Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa"

Week 2:

T 1/27: A Global East Africa and the Indian Ocean World

Reading: East Africa Historical Texts (Periplus, Chinese Texts, Ibn Battuta)

TH 1/29: The Rise of Swahili States

Reading: Kirkman, "The Coast of East Africa"

Week 3:

T 2/3: Islam, Trade, and Interior Connections

Reading: Pawlowicz and LaViolette, “Swahili Historical Chronicles from an Archaeological Perspective”

TH 2/5: History from Words: Linguistic evidence from the urban landscape

Reading: Nurse and Spear, “The Swahili Language”; Crowley and Bowerman “The Nature of Linguistic Relationships”

Week 4:

T 2/10: Portuguese and Omani Imperialism

**** Primary Source Analysis due in class****

Reading: “An Arabic History of Kilwa”

TH 2/12: The Ancient Great Lakes before Kingdoms

Reading: D. Schoenbrun, “Social Aspects of Agricultural Change between the Great Lakes”; J. Vansina, “Central Rwanda on the Eve of the Emergence of the Kingdom”

Week 5:

T 2/17: Knowledge and Power in Buganda

Reading: N. Kodesh, “Networks of Knowledge”; Wrigley, “The Kinglists of Buganda”

TH 2/19: The Rwanda State in an Historical Perspective

Reading: J. Vansina, “The Rwanda of Ndori” and “Social Transformations in the Nineteenth Century”

Week 6:

T 2/24: Commercial Networks and Consumerism

Reading: J. Prestholdt, “On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism” and 19th c. East African Images

TH 2/26: Slavery, Caravans, and Violence

Reading: Alpers, “The Story of Swema” [Chapter 11 in Robertson and Klein, *Women and Slavery in Africa*, available as an ACLS Humanities E-Book on the library website]

Week 7:

T 3/3: Social Transformations and Citizenship in Swahili Society

Reading: J. Glassman, "Theft and Marriage"

TH 3/5: Explorers, Missionaries, and the Foundations of Colonialism

Reading: Journal excerpts from Krapf and Speke

****Hand out Midterm essay prompt****

Week 8:

T 3/10: No Class, work on mid-term essay

TH 3/12: Land, Labor, and Indirect Rule

****Midterm essay due in class****

Week 9:

T 3/17: Gender, Generation, and Imperial Control in Central Kenya

Reading: L. Thomas, "Imperial Concerns and 'Women's Affairs'"

TH 3/19: Mobility and Urbanism

Reading: E. Callaci, "Dancehall Politics"

Week 10:

T 3/24: Community across the Colonial Divides

Readings: D. Peterson, "Casting Characters"

TH 3/26: Postcolonial Politics and "National" Culture

Reading: A. Ivaska, "Anti-Mini Militants Meet Modern Misses"; Ngugi, *Detained* (selections)

Week 11:

T 4/7: Healing and Colonial Medicine

Reading: Crane, *Scrambling for Africa*, pp. 1-108

TH 4/9: Global Health

Reading: Crane, *Scrambling for Africa*, pp. 109-182

Week 12:

T 4/14: “God Loves Uganda” (film)

*****Scrambling for Africa* review essay due in class****

TH 4/16: Politics of Sexuality in East Africa

Reading: Wainaina, “We Must Free Our Imaginations” pts. 1-6 (youtube videos) and “I am a homosexual, mum”

Week 13:

T 4/21: Conservation Narratives and Conflicts over Land and Wildlife

Reading: Benjaminsen, et.al., “State Control, Rent Seeking and Community Resistance”

TH 4/23: Cityscapes: Historical Perspectives on Nairobi and Dar es Salaam

Reading: B. Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write About this Place*, pp. 1-88

Week 14:

T 4/28: Politics and Popular Culture

Reading: Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write About this Place*, pp. 89-189; African Political Cartoons Database

TH 4/30: “Afropolitanism” and Wainaina’s Africa

Reading: B. Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write About this Place*, pp. 190-253; Dynamic Africa (on Tumblr)

Week 15:

T 5/5: Religion and the State in modern Kenya

Reading: J. Prestholdt, “Superpower Osama”; S. Al-Bulushi “Yesterday’s News”

TH 5/7: Closing Discussions: African Activism and Engaging East Africa

Reading: twitter; African Affairs Blogs

*****Hand out Final Exam essay prompt.*****

Exam Week:

W 5/13: Final Exam essay due on learn@UW