

University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Department of History
 Spring 2010-2011

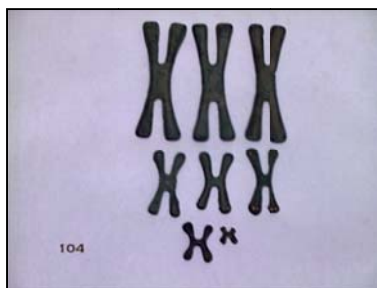
Florence Bernault
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 Off. hours: Tuesday 2: 30pm-3:30 pm
 and by appointment

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History 445 : Equatorial Africa Since 1500
 Tuesday-Thursday, 1:00 pm-2:25 pm, 2251 Humanities

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 millenia, 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 Kongolese 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 Kongolese 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.

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.

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.

John Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony* (1998)

Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized. The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960* (2010)

Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (1995)

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

Phyllis Martin, "Power, Cloth and Currency on the Loango Coast," (1987)

Phyllis Martin, "Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville," (1994)

Jan Vansina, "Raffia Cloth in West Central Africa, 1500-1800" (1998)



Luba Seat, 18th c.

COURSE SCHEDULE**Week 1. Introduction 1**

01/18 Mapping Equatorial Africa by 1000
 01/20 Bantu Migrations

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

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

Robert H. Milligan, The Fetish Folk of West Africa (1912), 240-245

[19 pp + 25 pp]

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 [72 pp]
 Vansina, chap. 11, 298-324

Week 15. Independence and Beyond, 1950s-2000s04/26 **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

