

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Spring 2011-2012

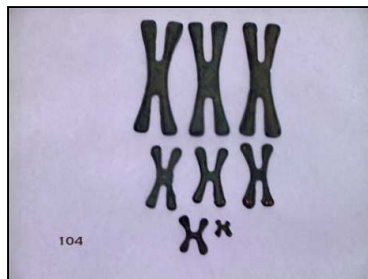
Florence Bernault
4131 Humanities / phone 263-5424
Off. hours: Tuesday 3:10-3:50 pm,
Thursday 5:20 pm- 5:50 pm
and by appointment

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Learn@UW : 445

History 445 : Equatorial Africa Since 1500
Tuesday-Thursday, 4:00 pm-5:15 pm, 1217 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%
- MID TERM EXAM (weeks 1-6): 20%
- Take Home Essay (4-5 page): 20%
- Short Take-Home Essay on Explorers and Fang (3-page): 15%
- Take Home Essay on Vansina and Martin (6-8 page): 20%
- ORAL PARTICIPATION in Discussion: 20%

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- Map Quiz. Due in class on 01/31. (5%)
- Take Home Essay (four to five page, min. 1,000 words, max. 1,300 words) [NB: all essays are double-spaced]. Instructions given in class ahead of time. Due in class on 02/21. (20%)
- MID TERM on course material and readings for weeks 1-6. 02/ (20%)
- Take Home Essay on primary sources on explorers and the 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 03/20. (15%)
- Take Home Essay on Vansina and Martin (six to eight-page essay, min. 1,500 words-max. 2,000 words, double-spaced). A guideline sheet will be handed out ahead of time. Due in class on 03/24 (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. (20%)

3) GRADUATE STUDENTS should talk to me early in the semester for specific assignments.

Course Regulations

- Attendance is mandatory. You can miss two classes unexcused during the semester-- but not one that features an important class-discussion (in bold in the schedule). Three and more unexcused absences will lower your 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 ½ grade (e.g.: from a "B" to a "BC") 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 3/4 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. Bring readings in class for the appropriate week.

Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized. The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960* (2010)
 Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (1995)



Luba Seat, 18th c.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction

- 01/24 Mapping Equatorial Africa by 1000
- 01/26 Bantu Migrations

Reading packet: Jan Vansina, *The Land and Its Settlement*, 35-69
 Jan Vansina, *Population and Patterns of Settlement*, 79-96 [52 pp]

Week 2. Social Diversity 100/1500

- 01/31 Farmers and Hunters-Gatherers *****MAP QUIZ due in class*****
- 02/02 Discussion Grinker. *The Rise of Chiefdoms and Kingdoms*

Reading Packet: Roy Grinker, *Houses in the Rainforest*, 1-9, 18-52, & 138-146 [34 pp]

Week 3. The Kongo Kingdom

- 02/07 Contact with the Portuguese
 02/09 The Atlantic Trade and the Production of Slaves

Readings packet: Joseph Miller, *Way of Death*, 105-139 [34 pp]

Week 4. Production of Slaves: 1600-1800

- 02/14 Discussion on Miller. Markets and Caravans in the Interior
 02/16 Ctd. **The Lunda Kingdom?** or American crops

Reading Packet: Look at Map on Empires and Kingdoms 1400-1800
 Jan Vansina, *Raffia Cloth in West Central Africa*, 1-19
 Phyllis Martin, *Power, Cloth and Currency*, 135-147 [31 pp]

Week 5. Equatorial Africa and the Atlantic World

*****4-page PAPER DUE in class 02/21*****

- 02/21 American Imports and Social Changes
 02/23 Luanda and Benguela

Reading packet: David Birmingham, *Slave City: Luanda through German Eyes*, 1-17 [17 pp]

Week 6. The Nineteenth Century

- 02/28 Transitions in the 19th Century
 03/01 European Traders and Factories

Reading Packet: Phyllis Martin, *Family Strategies*, 65-86
 Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized*, chapters 1 & 2, 10-57 [69 pp]

Week 7. Mid Term

- 03/06 No Class [prepare for the mid-term]
 03/08 *****MID TERM EXAM*****

Week 8. Explorers and Local Societies (Primary Sources)

- 03/13 The Fang: Farmers, Migrants, and Warriors
 03/15 Explorers + Discussion on Primary Sources

Reading Packet: J. Fernandez, *Narratives of Fang-European Contacts, 1840-1910*, 27-48 [21 pp]

Primary Sources [end of reading packet]:

Paul B. Du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* (1861), 102-111 & 118-129

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

[25 pp]

Week 9. The Colonial Conquest

03/20 How Did It Happen? ***3-PAGE ESSAY ON PRIMARY SOURCES DUE IN CLASS***

03/22 Company Rule

Reading: Vansina, Being Colonized, chapters 3 & 4, 58-126 [66 pp]

Week 10. Land, Labor and Chiefs

03/27

03/29 Ctd. Discussion on Colonialism

Reading: Vansina, Being Colonized, chapters 6, 7 & 8, 150-243 [93 pp]

Week 11. SPRING BREAK**Week 12. Ideological and Spiritual Encounters**

04/10 Christianity and Syncretic Cults (Bwiti)

04/12 Modern Life

Reading: James Fernandez, Reinterpretations of Mission & Bwiti Chapel,
271-87 & 371-412
Vansina, Being Colonized, chapters 9, 10 & 11, 244-324 [137 pp]**Week 13. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: I**

04/17 Discussion on modernity. Colonial Cities

04/19 Political and Cultural Struggles in Town

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chapters 2, 3 & 4, 45-126 [81 pp]

Week 14. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: II

04/24 Women and Gender Roles

04/26 Politics and Elites

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chap. 5 & 6, 127-17 [72 pp]

Week 15. Independence and Beyond, 1950s-2000s

05/01 Zaire/ DRC : Case Study on Decolonization

05/03 Ctd ***6-8 page PAPER DUE on Vansina & Phyllis Martin***

No Reading

Week 16. Conclusion

05/08 Equatorial Africa Today

05/10 Conclusion