

## **HIST 600: Decolonization and African Nationalism**

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Office: 5116 Mosse Humanities Building  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30  
Class Time: Fridays 1:20-3:20  
Class Location: Mosse Humanities 5257

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1957, Ghana became the first sovereign nation in Africa to declare independence from colonial rule, and dozens of other African nations would soon follow suit. While people across the continent and the world celebrated the end of empire, not everyone agreed about what Africa's new nations would look like. In the years that followed decolonization, Africans from around the continent, and from various walks of life, grappled with the question: what did national sovereignty actually mean? For many, this was not only a political question, but a philosophical, cultural and moral conundrum as well. How would citizens of nations with boundaries that had been created by European colonizers develop a sense of shared identity and destiny? Should citizens, intellectuals and politicians communicate in European or African languages, and what were the stakes of such a decision? What would be the role of women in the new national governments? What would be the citizenship status of racial and ethnic minorities? Would political decolonization bring an end to the economic inequalities of the colonial era? Through weekly discussions of readings, and through the pursuit of in-depth individual research projects, members of this seminar will investigate how Africans in newly independent nations constructed their world and their future after the end of colonial rule.

### COURSE GOALS:

The central goal of this course is to guide each student in the writing of a 25-page paper, based on original historical research. Each research project will explore some aspect of decolonization and African nationalism through primary sources. As preparation, we will work in consultation with the African Studies librarian at the UW Memorial Library in order to learn about the different kinds of primary sources held in the collection. Potential sources include African newspapers, archives, memoirs, speeches, artwork, philosophical writings, and oral history interviews.

My hope is that you will identify a question or topic that you find personally compelling, and that through in-depth research you will find a unique and meaningful story to tell about it. While such a project requires that students hone a sense of intellectual autonomy and individual initiative, this course also invites you to join a wider community of people who have thought about the history and meaning of African nationalism, including both professional historians and your peers in the seminar. During the final two weeks of the semester, students will present their work to the seminar.

In order to help you to complete a successful research project, this course will offer you the chance to master several skills, including the following:

1. Defining a compelling historical research question
2. Locating, collecting and analyzing primary source evidence
3. Building a bibliography of secondary source materials
4. Engaging in scholarly conversation with both peers and professional historians
5. Presenting convincing historical arguments in oral and written form

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Students are required to purchase Frederick Cooper's book *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002). This book is available in the campus bookstore. Students are also required to purchase the course packet for the class, which is available for purchase in the L&S Copy Center in Room 1650 in Mosse Humanities.

All students in the course will complete the assigned readings on the syllabus, which are organized around key themes and questions in the study of the history of decolonization and nationalism in Africa. The required readings that all members of the seminar will complete are comparatively few in number for an upper-level seminar, yet students in this course will read quite a bit outside of the assigned texts. In addition to the readings that are required for everybody, students are expected to be reading primary and secondary materials that relate to their specific research region and topic.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

- **Final paper:** The final paper should be 20-25 pages.
- **Research tasks:** Each week, there will be an assignment designed to help you to make progress on your research project. Each research task will come with a handout, which can be found on the Learn@UW site.
- **Map quiz:** You will be asked to identify modern African nations on a blank map of Africa.
- **Reading Responses:** On weeks for which there are assigned readings, you will be asked to write a brief response paper, no more than 3 paragraphs long. There will be seven of these due throughout the semester. Guidelines are included in the course packet.
- **Participation:** You are all expected to participate in class discussions and activities. This means that you must arrive in class prepared to discuss the readings and to engage with fellow seminar participants.
- **Final presentation:** During the final two class sessions, students will present their projects to the seminar.
- **Survey:** In weeks 1 and 14, students will receive an online survey from the history department. These surveys are intended to help the department assess how well our courses are serving our majors. They surveys are ungraded, but required. Thank you in advance for helping us with this.

#### GRADING SCHEME:

Final paper.....30%  
Final presentation.....10%  
Research tasks.....25%  
Reading Responses.....15%  
Participation.....15%  
Map Quiz.....5%

#### RESOURCES AND POLICIES

I encourage you all to come to my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or your progress in it. These hours are set aside specifically for your benefit. I really hope to see you there.

We will spend time in class discussing writing, style, and citation methods. In addition, I encourage you to make use of the resources and services available at the Writing Center. More information about this can be found here:

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

I will strictly enforce the university policies on academic honesty. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please be on the safe side and check. You can start here:

[http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

If you are still unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, and whether you are committing plagiarism, please be on the safe side and come speak to me during office hours.

Ignorance about definitions of plagiarism will not be an acceptable excuse. More detailed information about student codes of conduct may be found here:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

#### COURSE SCHEDULE:

##### **Week 1, September 6: Introductions**

*Due:*

Please complete the online survey from history department. You will receive it in an email.

##### **Week 2, September 13: From Social Movements to Independence**

*Read:* Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 38-190

*Study:* Map of Modern African nation-states (in course packet)

*In-class:*

1. Map quiz of postcolonial African nations
2. Travel to UW Memorial Library, Room 231 for introductory sessions on the African Studies collection Emilie Songolo, 2:20-3:20pm.

*Due:*

### **Reading Response #1**

### **Week 3, September 20: Nations as Imagined Communities**

*Read:*

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983), 1-46.
2. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1-34
3. Independence Speeches by Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Patrice Lumumba.

*Due:*

**Reading Response #2: (3 paragraphs):** In the first paragraph, summarize Benedict Anderson's argument. In the second paragraph, summarize Partha Chatterjee's response. In a final paragraph, analyze one of the speeches in light of the two readings.

**Research task:** Choose a nation, region or community that you will focus on for your research project.<sup>1</sup> Gather the following materials:

- a timeline of that nation/region/people's history
- a list a relevant people, places, images and key terms that you think will be important as background knowledge for your research
- synopses of 5 recent books or journal articles about the time and place that you are researching. At this stage, you need not READ these books and articles: instead, your task will be to learn what they are about. You may use book reviews, abstracts and/or descriptions from publishers.

### **Week 4, September 27: Constructing National Cultures**

*Read:*

1. Ngugi Wa Thiongo, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, (Oxford: James, Currey, 1986), 1-34.
2. Chinua Achebe, "English and the African Writer," *Transition* 75/76, 1997, 27-30 .

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<sup>1</sup> You should choose based on your interests AND on the kinds of primary sources that you anticipate will be available to you. If you intend to use sources in English, it is advisable that you choose a former British colony.

- Mary Jo Arnoldi, "Youth Festivals and Museums: The Cultural Politics of Public Memory in Postcolonial Mali," *Africa Today* 52, no. 4 (2006).
- Nate Plageman, *Highlife Saturday Night: Popular Music and Social Change in Urban Ghana*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 100-182.

*In-class*: second library session with African Studies librarian Emilie Songolo, Room 126, 2:20-3:20 pm.

*Due*:

**Reading Response #3**

**Research task**: Identify a research topic and draft a research question.

**Week 5, October 4: The Nation and its "Others"**

*Read*:

- Re-read: Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 176-180
- Leander Schneider, "The Maasai's New Clothes: A Developmentalist Modernity and Its Exclusions," *Africa Today* 53, no. 1 (2006), 101-131.
- Andrew Ivaska, "National Culture and its Others in a Cosmopolitan Capital," in *Cultured States: Youth, Gender and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 37-85.
- Andrew Ivaska, "'Anti-Urban Militants Meet Modern Misses: Urban Style, Gender and the Politics of National Culture in 1960s Dar Es Salaam'," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 104-121.
- James R. Brennan, "Blood Enemies: Exploitation and Urban Citizenship in the Nationalist Political Thought of Tanzania, 1958-75," *JAH* 47 (2006), 389-413

*Due*:

**Reading Response #4**

**Research task**: Identify a primary source that might be relevant to your topic (ie, a newspaper, online archive, memoir, etc) and write a primary source analysis of it.

**Week 6, October 11: Gender, Sexuality and the Nation**

*Read*:

- Jean Allman, "'Let Your Fashion Be in Line with Our Ghanaian Costume: Nation, Gender and the Politics of Cloth-Ing in Nkrumah's Ghana," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).
- Elizabeth Schmidt, "Emancipate your Husbands: Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58 in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, eds. J. Allman, S. Geiger and Musisi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 282-304.
- Tanya J. Lyons, "Guerrilla girls and women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, 305-326.

4. Chipo Hungwe, "Putting them in their place: 'respectable' and 'unrespectable' women in Zimbabwean gender struggles," *Feminist Africa* (6), 2006, 33-47

*Due:*

### **Reading Response #5**

**Research task:** Create a secondary source annotated bibliography with 7 secondary sources.

### **Week 7, October 18: Nationalism, the Family and Private Life**

*Read:*

1. Re-read Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 71-4.
2. Derek Peterson, "The Intellectual Lives of Mau Mau Detainees," *Journal of African History* 49 (2008).
3. Luise White, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (1990).
4. Andreana C. Prichard, "'Let Us Swim in the Pool of Love': Love Letters and Discourses of Community Composition in Twentieth-Century Tanzania," *Journal of African History* 54, no. 1, 2013

*Due:*

### **Reading Response #6**

**Research task:** Create a provisional outline of your paper, including a thesis statement.

### **Week 8, October 25: Race, Ethnicity and Nation**

*Read:*

1. Douglas Anthony, "'Resourceful and Progressive Blackmen': Modernity and Race in Biafra, 1967-70," *Journal of African History* 51 (2010).
2. Jonathon Glassman, "Sorting out the Tribes: The Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar's Newspaper Wars," *Journal of African History* 41, no. 3 (2000).
3. Liisa Malkki, "Context and Consciousness: Local Conditions for the Production of Historical and National Thought among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania," in *National Ideologies and the Production of National Cultures*, ed. Richard Fox, (Washington D.C.: American Anthropological Institute, 1990), 32-62.

*Due:*

### **Reading Response #7**

**Research task:** Write a short essay, no more than two double-spaced pages, describing and assessing the primary sources that make up your archive. What sources do you plan to use? What do they allow you to learn about? What are the limitations of your sources, i.e., what do they *not* allow you to learn about?

**Week 9, November 1:**

*Due:*

**Research task:** Give an oral presentation of your topic in class. Presentations should be no longer than five minutes.

**Week 10, November 8:**

No class meeting;

*Due:*

**Research task:** Schedule an individual meeting with me to discuss your progress.

**Week 11, November 15:**

No class meeting

*Due:*

**Research task:** Complete a first draft of your final paper. Turn in one copy to me and another copy to your assigned peer reviewer.

**Week 12, November 22:**

No class meeting.

*Due:*

**Research tasks:**

1. Read your peer's first draft, prepare feedback, and email your comments to your peer by Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.
2. Consider your peer's comments on your first draft. Write a paragraph or two describing how you will respond to your peer's suggestions.
3. Turn in both your peer's comments and your response to me.

November 28: Thanksgiving

**Week 13, December 6: Final presentations, Group 1**

**Week 14, December 13: Final presentations, Group 2**

*Due:*

**Final Paper**

Complete online department survey