

University of Wisconsin-Madison

History of Africa since 1870

History 105—Fall Semester, 2020 - 4 Credits



Fabrice Monteiro, Untitled #11, 2016. A representation of Ogun, the Nigerian god of iron—draped in technological waste. The fiery mass wielded by Ogun refers to a method for burning away plastic insulation from copper wires. The process, often performed by youths, produces highly toxic smoke.

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Teaching Assistant: Hermann von Hesse—vonhesse@wisc.edu; office hours: ____

Major historic and current problems in African life, as seen by Africans.

As a survey of the last 150 years in Africa, this course equips students for professional success in the global marketplace. The sheer diversity of Africa demands global competencies and cross-cultural skills from those who study its past. This course has two threads: one covering the breadth of the continent over one and a half centuries, and one focused on one corner over a short time: West Africa from 1955-1960. For the former, students will write five quizzes on the assigned readings. For the latter: students will write a term paper in three parts on the question of tradition in postcolonial nationalism, drawn from major works of literature.

1. COURSE FORMAT

Instructional Modality

This is a blended online course: fully online lectures and two of four discussion sections online.

Credit Hours:

This class meets for the equivalent of four class periods each week over the fall semester:

- A short weekly introductory/announcements video.
- Two video lectures covering the big picture (each including a short comprehension check and opportunity for questions)
- A weekly synchronous “workshop”: a guided read through a focused primary source, along with a small written response.
- Weekly discussion sections (held synchronously – check your schedule) to help you work through the readings and assignments.
- Various quizzes and essays (see below for details).

The credit hours designation carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc.) for about two hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Required readings:

Textbook [ebook acceptable]:

Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Africa, 1800 to the Present* (third edition) (Wiley-Blackwell, 2019)

Core readings [ebooks acceptable for Okorafor, Gordon, and Kendhammer/McCain; I strongly recommend paper for Achebe, Oyono and Sembène as you will write a comparative essay on them]:

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease* (Penguin, 2011)

Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti* (Tor Books, 2015)

Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy* (Waveland Press, 1966)

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood* (Longman, 2007)

David M. Gordon, *Apartheid in South Africa: A Brief History with Documents* (Macmillan, 2017)

Brandon Kendhammer and Carmen McCain, *Boko Haram* (Ohio U. Press, 2018)

Workshop readings (some are actually videos) and other short readings: see Canvas. These are marked below with an *asterisk.

Assignments:

Postcolonial vision essays (all submitted in Canvas)

1. Ferdinand Oyono essay
2. Chinua Achebe essay
3. Ousmane Sembène essay
4. Combination/Revision essay

Quizzes (all to be completed in Canvas; each open for a week)

1. Colonialism and Resistance
2. Kwame Nkrumah + Ghanaian Proverbs
3. Apartheid
4. Boko Haram
5. Afro-Futurism + Afro-Pentecostalism

Participation

1. Workshop Journals
2. Discussion

NOTE: There is no final exam!

2. GRADES

Grades are assigned on the basis of accumulation of points over the course of the semester (up to 100; see below). In theory, each student could get an A (or could fail). You accumulate points in three ways: participation, quizzes, and essays; I also assign up to three points at the end of the semester for your overall academic growth. (This allows me to round you up to a nearby grade.)

Due dates and point values

Drop boxes and quizzes close at 11:59 PM on the dates indicated:

Essays (37 points total)

Ferdinand Oyono essay (due 9/19):	9 points
Chinua Achebe essay (due 10/10):	9 points
Ousmane Sembène essay (due 11/14):	9 points
Combination/Revision essay (due 12/12):	10 points

Quizzes (50 points total)

Colonialism and Resistance (open 9/27-10/03):	10 points
Kwame Nkrumah + Tradition (open 10/25-31):	10 points
Apartheid (open 11/15-21):	10 points
Sahel Conflicts (open 11/29-12/05):	10 points
Afro-Futurism + Afro-Pentecostalism (open 12/7-16):	10 points

Participation (10 points)

Workshop Participation (incl. weekly journals):	5 points
Discussion Participation:	5 points

Academic Growth (3 points)

(assigned by instructor and TA at end of semester):	3 points
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Assignments described

Essays (37 points total)

You will write short (around 750 word) essays, with the same prompt, on three different young thinkers on social commentaries inside fiction, each written around 1960. At the end of the semester, you will revise these into a single, comparative essay of around 3,000 words.

The prompt: *As author X looked ahead to independence from colonialism, what role did they think traditional wisdom ought to play in the structuring of society and government?*

Group work is permissible but must be indicated (because I check your work against plagiarism trackers) – each of you will submit your own essay and be graded as individuals.

Quizzes (50 points total)

You will complete five quizzes in Canvas. Each will be open for a week; feel free to work with others (please name your collaborators), but you will be scored on your own.

Each quiz consists of a number of critical short essay questions on the assigned readings. The questions will be open-book, and you can re-take them as you like.

Caution: Canvas is not always reliable. You are advised to write your answers elsewhere (such as in Microsoft OneDrive), only entering them into Canvas when ready to submit.

Workshop Journal (5 points)

Most weeks included a primary source workshop. At its conclusion, I will direct you in a written response. In most cases, I will assign a nominal score in Canvas.

Discussion (5 points)

Each week you will meet in discussion sections with your Teaching Assistant, who will score these points at their discretion. Two of your discussion sections are online, and two are provisionally live (it is possible that the entire course will be moved online if the university orders). In discussion you will be accountable for the week's readings, especially the textbook.

Academic Growth (3 points)

(assigned by instructor at end of semester): 3 points

Grading scale:

0-59 = F; 60-69 = D; 70-76 = C; 77-82 = BC; 83-86 = B; 87-92 = AB; 93-100 = A

Grading complaints

I entertain grading complaints, but I require live discussion (by video conference). If you wish for me to reconsider a paper or exam grade, you must: 1) Submit a formal request to me (by email), and 2) come to discuss the issue in person, justifying your complaint substantially (as in: explaining your answer/argument). I can be quite generous, but this formality is part of your learning experience.

3. POLICIES and RULES:

PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES

Lecture materials and recordings for History 105 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

STUDENTS' RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our

campus and surrounding community.

UW-MADISON [BADGER PLEDGE](#)

UW-MADISON [FACE COVERING GUIDELINES](#)

While on campus all employees and students are required to [wear appropriate and properly fitting](#) face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

You have my (Paul Grant's) full support to develop your religious lives while in this course. I was once a student myself! So please communicate with me for accommodations, if needed.

Because this course operates on a week-by-week basis, most assignments are available well in advance of the due date. In a few instances (such as Rosh Hashanah), an assignment may be due on a holiday: extensions are entirely possible—but *you must ask first!*

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

4. COURSE OUTLINE:

Unit I: Overview

Module One (Sept. 2-5): Approaching African History I

Video Lectures:

- Course introductions
- A thousand years in ten minutes: Africa, 870-1870

Readings (due by beginning of next week):

*Ghanaian Proverbs

*The Story of Mantis and the Ticks (South Africa)

Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy* (first half)

Reid, pages 8-16 and chapter 4 (Southern Frontiers)

Module Two (Sept. 6-12): Approaching African History II

Video lectures:

- Africa in the year 1870 part 1: North and West
- Africa in 1870 part 2: East, Central, and South

Workshop: Proverbs and Storytelling

Readings due by 9/14:

*The Story of Sheep and Python (Nigeria)

Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy* (second half)

Reid, chapter 8 (The Compass and the Cross)

Unit II: A Stolen Chance

Module Three (Sept. 13-19): An Open Window

Note: the Jewish holiday Rosh Hashanah comes at the end of this module. Email me (pgrant@wisc.edu) if you need an extension on the assignment!

Video lectures:

- Industrial revolutions, capitalism, and urbanization
- Foreign religions and their messengers

Workshop: Congo atrocities

ESSAY 1: Ferdinand Oyono—due in Canvas, 9/19

Readings due by 9/21:

Gordon, documents 1-4

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, (first half)

Reid, chapter 9 (Whatever Happens)

Module Four (Sept. 20-26): The window is closed

Video lectures:

- Foreign Rule
- Settler Colonialism

Workshop: Direct and Indirect Rule

Readings due by 9/28:

*Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, “Women’s Conjugal Strategies in a World of Cash and Cocoa,” excerpt from *I Will Not Eat Stone* (2000)

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, (second half)

Reid, chapter 11 (Pax Colonia)

Module Five (Sept. 27 – Oct. 3): Pushing the window open again

Video lectures:

- Cocoa and Coffee
- World War One

Workshop: Gender and Capitalism

QUIZ: Colonialism (open 9/27-10/03)

Readings due by 10/05:

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 1-34 (chapters “Ad’jibidji” through “Maïmouna”)

Reid, chapter 12 (Hard Times)

Reid, chapter 14 (The Beached Whale)

Unit III: Toward Autonomy

Module Six (Oct. 4-10): Social changes in the 1920s

Video lectures:

- Indigenous Prophets
- Social Changes—Guest Lecture Hermann von Hesse

Workshop: Reconfiguring religion

ESSAY 2: Chinua Achebe—due in Canvas, 10/10

Readings due by 10/12:

*Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom* (excerpts)

*Jomo Kenyatta, Independence Week Speeches

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 35-77 (chapters “Daouda-Beaugosse” through “Ramatoulaye”)

Gordon, documents 13-19

Module Seven (Oct. 11-17): Rival visions

Video lectures:

- Intellectual History of Independence
- Thinking apartheid, communism, and jihad

Workshop: Kwame Nkrumah [no journal—this will help you with the quiz in two weeks]

Readings due by 10/19:

*Sayyid Qutb: *Islam: The Religion of the Future* (excerpts)

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 78-127 (chapters “Thiémoko” through “Mame Sofi”)

Reid, chapter 15 (Conceiving and Producing Nations)

Module Eight (Oct. 18-24): The Black Feet and The Black Star

Video lectures:

- Algeria
- Colonial Independence

Workshop: Salafism

Readings due by 10/26:

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 128-163 (chapters “Sounkaré” through “The Apprentices”)

Reid, chapter 16 (Compromising Conflict)

Unit IV: Unfinished Business

Module Nine (Oct. 25-31): Postcolonial Bloodshed

Video lectures:

- Civil war in Congo
- Civil war in Nigeria

Workshop: “Tribalism”

QUIZ: Kwame Nkrumah + traditional wisdom—open 10/25-31

Readings due by 11/02:

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 164-204 (chapters “The Vatican” through “The March of the Women”)

Reid, chapter 17 (Unsafe Foundations)

Gordon, documents 20-27 and 33-35

Module Ten (Nov. 1-7): Late Cold War

Video lectures:

- Armed resistance in South Africa and Rhodesia
- Late Cold War: Ethiopia and Angola

Workshop: Youth Rebellion

Readings due by 11/06:

Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood*, 205-end (chapters “The Meeting” through “Epilogue”)

Gordon, p. 20-23 and documents 46-50

Kendhammer/McCain, *Boko Haram*, introduction (13-24)

Module Eleven (Nov. 8-14): Majority rule

Video lectures:

- The turn in South Africa
- The turn in South Africa (cont.)

Workshop: Truth and Reconciliation

ESSAY 3: Ousmane Sembène—due in Canvas, 11/14

Readings due before next week:

Reid, chapter 19 (Rectification, Redemption, and Reality)

Kendhammer/McCain, *Boko Haram*, chapters 1-2 (25-86)

Unit V: the recent past

Module Twelve (Nov. 15-28): Unseen Powers

Note: this double week includes Thanksgiving recess, but the quiz is due by the end of the first week.

Video lecture:

- Great Lakes Wars

Film:

- *African Christianity Rising* (link in Canvas)

Workshop:

- Pentecostalism (11/18)
- [no workshop on 11/25]

QUIZ: Apartheid—open 11/15-21

Readings due by 11/23:

*Grace Iwhere vs. the Mermaids

Kendhammer/McCain, *Boko Haram*, chapters 3-4

Readings due by 11/30:

Kendhammer/McCain, *Boko Haram*, chapter 5

Module Thirteen (Nov. 29 – Dec. 5): New Threats

Video lectures:

- Oil and Minerals
- Islamist insurrections in the Sahel

Workshop: Climate Change

QUIZ: Sahel conflicts—open 11/29-12/05

Readings due by 12/06:

Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*

Module Fourteen (Dec. 6-10): New Opportunities

Video lectures:

- The Global Africa in the Twenty-First Century
- Conclusion: the intergalactic Africa

Workshop: Afro-Futurism

No Readings due

ESSAY 4: Combination/Revision essay—due 12/12

QUIZ: Afro-futurism + Afro-Pentecostalism—open 12/7-16