Hist-225: “Jihad” Movements in Africa

History 201, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 2022

Profesor: Khaled Esseissah
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Course Time: M/W/F 9:55am-10:45am
Class Location: Mosse Humanities Building, 1641
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:00am-1:00pm and by appointment
Office: 4110 Mosse Humanities Building

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course surveys the history of “Jihad” movements in Africa from the emergence of al-Murabitun or Almoravid in the 11th century to the rise of Boko Haram and al-Shabaab extremist organizations the early 2000s, and provides a discussion of key themes that link these movements to the wider Muslim World. The class focuses on history, but it draws on methods, concepts, and insights from various disciplines, including archaeology, art history, ethnomusicology, and political science. We discuss socio-political and economic transformations associated with African “Jihad” movements over centuries, and we reflect critically on the meanings of the concept of “Jihad” in the past and the present. No previous knowledge of Africa or Islam is required.

Course Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, you should be able to:
1) Develop a general understanding of the core concepts and working vocabulary of the historical study of Jihad in Islam
2) Gain an understanding of the historical and contemporary movements of renewal and reform (tajdeed and islah) in Africa.
3) Use historical evidence and perspectives to explain the complexities involved in the emergence of Muslim reform movements in Africa.
4) Obtain an understanding of the differences and similarities of African Jihad movements across time and space.
5) Practice writing and presenting in different modes in order to hone and polish expressive abilities.

COURSE READINGS
You are required to obtain copies of the following texts:

Alex Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups*

Rudolph Ware, Zachary Wright, Amir Syed eds., *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa.*

All other course readings are available on the Canvas website.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Success in this course depends upon meeting the following course requirements:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>(150pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Short Readings Responses</td>
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<td>Three Short Media Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Attendance is mandatory and will be noted. Please do not deprive us of your critical insights.** This class requires your attendance and active participation during class sessions.

**Participation: 15 % (150pts)**

Participation means more than attending class. You can only participate fully if you attend, if you have completed the readings, and if you are ready to engage with your fellow students.

I will grade your participation on the basis of the contribution you make to the overall class discussion. I will note your efforts to engage critically not only the assigned materials but also the questions and observations of others in the class. You are expected to contribute to—but not dominate—class discussions, so please be sure that everyone has the opportunity to share thoughts, opinions, and questions.

**An “A” grade for participation** is earned by a student who enthusiastically attends all classes, gives evidence of having completed the assigned readings, and consistently engages the class in thoughtful and sophisticated critical analysis of the assigned readings, thus enhancing the level and depth of class discussions.

**A “B” grade for participation** is earned by a student who missed a class, whose contributions to class are inconsistent in terms of critical analysis and engagement of issues raised during the class.
Grades below “B” (i.e., “C”, “D”, “F”) for participation are given to students who remain passive and unwilling to contribute to class discussions, have clearly not read the assigned materials, and who fail to attend class regularly.

Three Media Responses (30 %)
During the course of the semester you will write 3 short media responses over the course of the semester. Media responses ask you to think critically about media representations of Islamic movements in Africa based on the materials we read in the first two weeks of class. In media response 1, you should follow a major U.S. newspaper, radio station, or television news service’s coverage and monitor how the cover African stories related to terrorism and insecurity (NYTimes, Christian Science Monitor, Boston Globe, Indianapolis Star, Chicago Tribune, CNN, CBS, ABC, NBC, etc.). In media response 2, you should follow a major non-U.S. based newspaper, radio station, or television news service (BBC, The Guardian, RFI, Le Monde, Público, El País, Al Jazeera, etc.). In media response 3, look at African newspaper, radio, or television news service (The Mail and Guardian, The Zimbabwe Herald, SABC, KBC, Nigerian Guardian, Nigerian Punch, Kenyamoja.com, etc.).

Read, listen to, or watch several pieces (at least 5) and then use the following questions to craft a response:

1.) Note patterns in representations: are there similarities in portrayals/images? instances of stereotyping or essentializing categories? Repetition of themes?

2.) Note value assumptions in terms of who has power, who solves problems, how problems are solved.

3.) Who is the intended audience?

   - What appeals are made to what audiences?

   - Whose beliefs or values are being reinforced or validated?

4.) What’s missing or left out of the representation?

   - What complexities or variations are masked over?
   - What is included and what is excluded?

   - Find alternative or counter-examples in the course readings or elsewhere

Three reading responses (RRs) (30%):
(i) **Due on September 30 by 7:00am on Canvas**
Reading response 1 on readings chosen from class sessions from Sep. 9 and Sep. 30

(ii) **Due on October 31 by 7:00am on Canvas**
Reading response 2 is due today by 7:00am: readings chosen from class sessions from Oct. 3 and Oct. 31

(iii) **Due on November 30 by 7:00am on Canvas**
Reading response 3 is due today by 7:00am: readings chosen from class sessions from Nov. 2 and Nov. 30

In your reading responses, you should not summarize the reading. Instead, I am asking you to do three things:

- Select *three readings (or films)* from at least two sessions. You can choose only one short story or essay of less than 10 pages.
- Select from each reading *two direct citations* (of c. 50 consecutive words) that go to the heart of the arguments or insights of the author *and* are important to you (whether you find them enlightening or are critical of them). In the case of a film, you can analyze two direct citations or two scenes.
- Explain in your own words what the direct citation says or means in the context of the reading (c. 150 words);
- Briefly comment/reflect on why you chose this particular citation (c. 150 words).
- You must also give a full bibliographical reference (and a page number), which does not have to be part of the word-count.

I would expect that this means that, for each of the three readings, you would have a response of c. 400 words; since the RR consists of your response to three readings, this would yield a word count of c. 1200 words, but *this is just a general guideline and RRs can be somewhat shorter or longer without any penalty.*

While you are always encouraged to ask questions, please do so in class and do not make questions the main focus of your reading response. You will get credit for each of the assigned reading responses (10% of the grade for each, see below).

**Oral Presentation (5%): One 7–8-minute oral class presentation due on a date specific to you:**

A short, 7–8-minute oral class presentation about a reading of the syllabus *or* on a reading or film that is NOT on the syllabus but which both you and Prof. Esseissah find important. I will ask you to pick a date and reading by way of a google doc; if you want to make your own choice, propose this to Prof. Esseissah early on so that we can decide where to fit it into the syllabus. Before you present, you must meet with Prof. Esseissah to discuss/brainstorm about the chosen reading. You must also run your outline or PowerPoint by Prof. Esseissah before you present to the class.

**Final exam (20%) is due Wednesday, December 14th, 2022 by 11:00pm on Canvas:** Open-book, take-home exam essay (2500 words) You will answer 3 essay questions about selected readings of the syllabus *from October 15 up to this point.* Detailed assignment will be discussed in class. Assignment to be posted one week
before the due date. Expectations and grading scales will be discussed in class before exam \textit{(25 \% of the course grade)}. Please submit your paper on Canvas by 11:00 PM.

More details to follow on each assignment!

\textbf{GENERAL INFORMATION \& CLASSROOM CONDUCT}

\textit{Technology in the Classroom:}

Studies show that students who take notes by hand learn material more effectively than those who take notes on a laptop. Studies also show that using a laptop in class not only has negative learning outcomes for the individual laptop user, but for other members of the class as well. For these reasons, my policy is that there will be no laptops allowed in this class. If you need specific accommodations regarding technology in the classroom, please get in touch ASAP.

\textbf{Writing Resources:} The History Lab is a resource center where experts PhD students will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process — choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts — the History Lab can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Go to: https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/

\textbf{Academic Integrity:} I expect you to know and abide by the university’s policies on academic integrity. This course includes instruction on the basic principles of academic integrity. However, as in every course, you are responsible for potential violations throughout your enrollment. I follow the university’s policies for suspected violations. For more information, see: https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

\textbf{Disability:} Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/

\textbf{Extension Policy:} I will normally accommodate lateness due to illness, serious family events, or other exceptional circumstances. I will not accept a late paper unless you have asked prior permission. \textbf{For late work or make-up work, you have to produce a documentation of your excuse (e.g., doctor’s note) prior to missing the assignment.} An extension for a final assignment requires requesting an incomplete grade.

\textbf{Special Learning needs:} If you have special learning needs, please let me know as soon as you possibly can, so that I can make the necessary arrangements.
Syllabus revision: While it is unlikely, this syllabus is subject to revision at any time by the instructor.

Some Nuts and Bolts

• Do not be late to class. Turn off or silence cell phones.

• Please learn each other’s names.

• Respect the speaker, even when you do not agree with or respect the point the speaker is making.

• Listen carefully; do not interrupt—even when you are excited to respond.

• Try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify) and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.

• Keep an open mind—enter the classroom dialogue with the expectation of learning something new.

Look forward to learning about—and being challenged by—ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than your own.

• Do not “monopolize” the conversation; give others a chance to contribute to the discussion.

• Support an atmosphere of learning and growth. Approach discussion as a means to “think out loud.” Allow others (as well as yourself) to revise and clarify ideas and positions in response to new information and insights.

• Bring out ideas, perspectives, or solutions that you think are not yet represented or haven’t yet been adequately discussed.

• Support your arguments with evidence. Be honest when you are not sure if you have enough evidence to make a strong argument or when your thoughts about a topic are still speculative or exploratory.

• Try not to make assumptions; ask questions to learn more about other perspectives,
especially those that are different from your own.

- Talk with me about patterns in the discussion that are troubling or that may be

- I will use Canvas to send email updates to the class. Please ensure that your settings allow you to receive emails from me as they come in so that you don’t miss vital information.

**Communication with Professor**

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet in person. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below:

- **Check the syllabus.** Before sending your email or message, be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus or announcements.

- **Be patient.** If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response **within 2 business days maximum.** Please allow **2 business days** for assessment submission feedback.

- **Specify subject.** Subject line should include the topic of the message and class title.

- **Greet & Close.** E-mails should begin with a formal greeting and end with you signing your name in all messages/emails. So, if you send an **email to me,** please use proper format, including a salutation, complete sentences, a closing, and your name. Here’s an example:

  Dear Professor Esseissah,

  *I have the plague and I will not be able to attend class tomorrow. I will make sure to keep up with the reading and assignments.*

  Thank you,

  Serious Student

- **Check writing.** Proofread (i.e. grammar and spelling) your message before sending.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Sep. 7: Course introduction, syllabus, expectations**

Please complete day one questionnaire before class time!


- Michael Bonner, Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice (Princeton University Press, 2006); Chapter 3: “Muhammad and His Community.”


- Asma Afsaruddin, Striving in the path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought, 206-268.


Sep. 14: Reconceptualizing Jihad in the Study of Islam in Africa


Optional reading:

Sep. 16: Sufi Conceptions of Jihad in Early & Medieval Islamic History


First Media Response is due today!

- Selections from Rudolph Ware, Zachary Wright, Amir Syed eds., *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa*

Sept. 21: The emergence of *al-Murabitun* or Almoravid


Sep. 23: Almoravid *Jihad* across the Sahara and Spain

- Russell, “Responses to the Almoravid Intervention in Al-Andalus,” in *Twenty-First Century Jihad, Law, Society and Military Action*.

Sep. 26: Almohad *Jihad*


Sep. 28: Architecture, socioeconomic and educational development under Almoravid and Almohad


- Watch the documentary Lost Kingdoms of Africa Series 2 - 3 of 4 The Berber Kingdom of Morocco, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmVPd4f6Oo8&t=1165s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmVPd4f6Oo8&t=1165s), for discussion in class.

Sep. 30: Nāṣir al-Dīn’s *Jihad* across the Sahara and Senegambia region


Reading response 1 is due today by 7:00am: readings chosen from class sessions from Sep. 9 and Sep. 30
Oct. 3: Malik Sy and the establishment of Bundu State

Oct. 5: The Jakhanke’s movement in Futa Jallon

Oct. 7: Sulaymaan Baal, Abdul Qādir Kan, and the 1776 Revolution
- Paul Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions*, 9-35.

- Rudolph Ware, Zachary Wright, Amir Syed eds., *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa*, 1-65.

- Mervyn Hiskett *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usman Dan Fodio*, 1-79 (available as e-book through Lauinger’s home page.).
- "Kitāb Al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to ‘Uthmān Dan Fodio."

Oct. 14: Aḥmad Lobbo and establishment of the Caliphate of Ḥamdallāhi


**Second Media Response is due today!**

**Oct. 17: Jihad & Resistance in the Age of Colonialism, Part 1: Mahdism in Sudan**

• Sharkey, Heather J. "Jihads and Crusades in Sudan from 1881 to the Present." (2012): 263.


**Oct. 21: Jihad & Resistance in the Age of Colonialism, Part 3: Algeria**

• Benjamin Claude, “Just War and Jihad in the French Conquest of Algeria,” Chapter 11

• *July Blalack*, *The Migration of Resistance and Solidarity: ʿAbd Al-Qādir Al-JazāʾIrī’s Promotion of Hijra*

**Oct. 24: Jihad & Resistance in the Age of Colonialism, Part 4: Mauritania**

• July Blalack, *Al-Shaikh Māʾ al-ʿAynayn: Maghrebi-Saharan literary geographies on the eve of colonization.*
Oct. 26: Jihad & Resistance in the Age of Colonialism, Part 5: Libya


Oct. 28: Jihad & Resistance in the Age of Colonialism, Part 5: Northern Somalia


Oct. 31: Contemporary “Jihadist” & Terrorist Groups in Africa


Watch in Class: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLojPQjkbeA

Reading response 2 is due today by 7:00am: readings chosen from class sessions from Oct. 3 and Oct. 31

Nov. 2: Contemporary “Jihadist” groups in Algeria and Libya


Nov. 7: Boko Haram in West Africa: Part 2.

**Nov. 9: Boko Haram in West Africa: Part 3**

**Nov. 11: Boko Haram in West Africa: Part 4**

**Nov. 14: Boko Haram in West Africa: Part 5**

**Nov. 16: Lake Chad Basin (Niger, Cameroon, and Chad)**

**Third Media Response is due today!**
Nov. 18: Al-Shabaab in East Africa


Nov. 21: Contemporary “Jihadist” Groups in the Sahel region


Nov. 23: Liptako-Gourma Region (Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso)

  
  

Nov. 28: Islamic State Spread to Africa: Northern Mozambique Insurgency

Insurgency in Northern Mozambique: Nature and Responses

Nov. 30: Post-Jihadism in Northwest Africa: The Case of Mauritania


Reading response 3 is due today by 7:00am: readings chosen from class sessions from Nov. 2 and Nov. 30
Dec. 2: Countering Violent Extremism in Africa, part 1


Dec. 5: Countering Violent Extremism in Africa, part 2

At home of viewing the panel on Imperialism and Militarism in the Sahel and East Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gu3tZy6KLCE

Dec. 7: No class today: Take home exam

Dec. 14: Final Exam is due Wednesday, December 14th, 2022 by 11:00pm on Canvas