



Welcome to Africa: An Introductory Survey. This course is designed to be a multi-disciplinary introduction to the history, cultures, and politics of Africa. It is available to students as African Cultural Studies 277, Afro-American Studies 277, Anthropology 277, Geography 277, History 277, Political Science 277, or Sociology 277. Because Africa contains a remarkable array of languages, societies, and peoples, we cannot hope for exhaustive coverage. However, we will visit almost every major region of the continent at least once during the semester while we will explore a variety of themes and topics. I hope that you will take away from the course an understanding not just of *what* to think about the history, cultures, and politics of Africa but also *how* to think about this part of the world.

In-Person Lectures: Mon and Wed, 9:55-10:45, 2080 Grainger Hall Online Lectures: Friday (asynchronous)

Instructor

Neil Kodesh
kodesh@wisc.edu
Department of History

In-Person Office Hours
Wednesday, 11:30 AM-1:00 PM
Appointment required via [Calendly](#)
5115 Humanities

Virtual Office Hours via Zoom
Tuesday, 2:00-3:00 PM
Appointment required via [Calendly](#)

Teaching Assistants

Kevin Wamalwa
kevin.wamalwa@wisc.edu

Sooji Kim
sooji.kim@wisc.edu

Prince Vincent-Anene
vincentanene@wisc.edu

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- Develop familiarity with the study of Africa from different disciplinary perspectives
- Develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of historical and contemporary Africa
- Critically engage a variety of media about Africa
- Learn to read works of scholarship with an eye for identifying the argument
- Analyze sources and employ these sources to develop arguments

Communication

The Announcements section of the Course Home page is used to make important announcements. We expect you to login to the course site regularly and to read the news items carefully.

Have a question? Consider posting it on the “General Course Questions” discussion board instead of sending an email. Chances are your classmates have similar queries and we are all here to support each other! As instructors, we want to provide all of you with the same information. Any questions posted by 11:59 PM on Monday and Wednesday will be answered by 10:00 AM on Tuesday and Thursday. If posting the question would make you uncomfortable, feel free to email Professor Kodesh or your TA directly.

COURSE DESIGN, REQUIREMENTS, and EXPECTATIONS

This course will meet the 4 credits requirement by spending a total of 180 hours on learning activities. These include attending in-person lectures on Monday and Wednesday, viewing an online lecture-video on Friday, participation in discussion sections, engaging with learning materials, writing, and studying.

Course Design and Modality

This is a hybrid course. Information about course schedule, logistics, technology, and student support can be found on Canvas in Module 0: Introduction and Course Overview

This course consists of 15 modules (1 module per week):

- Module 1: Introduction to Africa
- Module 2: Themes in Early African History
- Module 3: Africa in the Age of Global Capitalism: The Atlantic Slave Trade
- Module 4: The Long 19th Century
- Module 5: Colonialism in Africa, Part 1
- Module 6: Colonialism in Africa, Part 2
- Module 7: Decolonization and its Aftermath in Africa
- Module 8: Politics in Africa, Part 1
- Module 9: Politics in Africa, Part 2
- Module 10: Postcolonial Economies and Economic Development in Africa
- Module 11: Popular Culture in Africa
- Module 12: Women's Empowerment and Education in Africa
- Module 13: Health, Disease, and Medicine in Africa
- Module 14: Science, Environment, and Conservation in Africa
- Module 15: Conclusions: Africa in the World Today

Each module includes 3 lessons, each of which contains the following two components (modules 6, 12, and 15 contain 2 lessons):

- **Lecture:** Lectures will take place in person on Monday and Wednesday in Grainger 2080, and online asynchronously for Friday. Since one goal of this course is to introduce you to Africa from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives, the course incorporates some recorded guest lectures from a range of Wisconsin faculty members engaged in the study of Africa. This format allows for greater breadth and variety in the subject matters covered. However, it also requires you to think more actively and creatively about how all of the different orientations, styles, and perspectives presented might be reconciled...or not.

I expect faithful attendance at lectures. Please note that to facilitate a comfortable learning environment for all, recording devices of any sort will be permitted only with the instructor's consent. All cell phones and other devices should also be turned off during class sessions. Students wishing to use laptop computers to take notes may do so, but please stay focused on the course.

- **Learning materials:** All required learning materials (readings, videos, films, podcasts, etc.) are available on Canvas. We have tried to select learning materials that will not only inform but also capture your curiosity and imagination. When reading an assignment, watching a film, or listening to a podcast, concentrate on the subject at hand, but think at the same time about how the ideas being presented connect with earlier lectures or learning materials, support them, or perhaps contradict them. Your sources will not always agree. Nor should they always agree. Remember throughout that one of the objectives of the course is for each of you to come away with a deeper understanding of the complexities of historical and contemporary Africa.

Each module will culminate with a **content check quiz**, which you will take on Canvas. Content check quizzes will consist of ten (10) to twenty (20) multiple choice questions designed to gauge your understanding of the module's lecture and learning materials. You must complete the content check for each module by 11:59 PM on the Monday following the module.

Discussion Sections

In addition to attending and watching lectures, engaging learning materials, and completing the content checks for each module, all students will attend a weekly in-person discussion section with the exception of week 1 and week 12 (Thanksgiving). You must be enrolled formally in one of the scheduled discussion sections and attend that section every week. If you are not enrolled in a discussion section, you are not enrolled in the course. A teaching assistant will lead each discussion section. The TAs are PhD students who have had considerable life experience in Africa and are carrying out Africa-related research. You can learn more about your TA in the "Meet your Teaching Assistants" section located in Module 0 on the course's Canvas site.

In discussion section your TA will help you review and sort out ideas presented in lectures, lead conversation and debate, help you analyze your readings and other learning materials, and help you prepare for written assignments.

Reading assignments and other learning materials follow the lecture for each lesson. You are expected to listen to, read, and watch everything that's been assigned. The learning materials are pegged to corresponding lectures in a logical way, but rarely will they merely repeat what a lecture has covered. Lectures and learning materials are intended to be complementary.

I have tried to select learning materials that will not only inform but also capture your curiosity and imagination. Please bring questions about the week's lectures and learning materials to discussion. If you are having trouble understanding something, other students probably are as well. So don't be shy about asking questions. **Please be aware that the assigned learning materials for any given week will generally be discussed in section the following week.**

Please see the Discussion Section Syllabus located in Module 0 for further information about expectations, requirements, and grading criteria for discussion sections.

Analytical Essays

You will write two analytical essays for this course. The first essay assignment will require you to produce approximately 5-6 pages of writing, typed and double-spaced. The second essay assignment will require you to produce approximately 7-8 pages of writing, typed and double-spaced.

1. The first essay assignment will cover modules 1-6. You will receive detailed instructions on Monday, October 4. The assignment will be due on Sunday, October 10 by 11:59 p.m.
2. The second essay assignment will cover modules 7-15. You will receive detailed instructions on Wednesday, December 8. The assignment will be due on Friday, December 17 by 11:59 p.m.

Course Schedule (please note that modules open on Saturday at 8 AM for the upcoming week)

You must complete the content check quiz for the prior week's module before you can begin a new module.	
Week 1: September 8-10	Module 1: Introduction to Africa
Week 2: September 13-17	Module 2: Themes in Early African History
Week 3: September 20-24	Module 3: Africa in the Age of Global Capitalism: The Atlantic Slave Trade
Week 4: September 27-October 1	Module 4: The Long 19th Century
Week 5: October 4-8	Module 5: Colonialism in Africa, Part 1
Week 6: October 11-15	Module 6: Colonialism in Africa, Part 2
Week 7: October 18-22	Module 7: Decolonization and its Aftermath in Africa
Week 8: October 25-29	Module 8: Politics in Africa, Part 1
Week 9: November 1-5	Module 9: Politics in Africa, Part 2
Week 10: November 8-12	Module 10: Postcolonial Economies and Economic Development in Africa
Week 11: November 15-19	Module 11: Popular Culture in Africa
Week 12: November 22-26	Module 12: Women's Empowerment and Education in Africa
Week 13: November 29-December 3	Module 13: Health, Disease, and Medicine in Africa
Week 14: December 6-10	Module 14: Science, Environment, and Conservation in Africa
See Module 0 for a detailed course schedule that includes due dates for weekly assignments	

EVALUATION and GRADING

Graded Work

- Content check quizzes (1 per week, 10-20 multiple choice questions per quiz; lowest score will be dropped)
- Discussion (see discussion section syllabus in Module 0 for requirements and expectations)
- 2 analytical essay assignments

Evaluation

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Content check quizzes (lowest score dropped)	25%
Discussion	25%
Analytical Essay #1	20%
Analytical Essay #2	30%

Grading Scale

A	AB	B	BC	C	D	F
93-100%	87-92.9%	82-86.9%	77-81.9%	72-76.9%	67-71.9%	0-66.9%

Academic Support

[The History Lab](#) is a resource where expert PhD students work with you on your projects 1-on-1. 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 staff will help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Visit our website early and often to schedule an appointment with a Lab TA or to find writing tips, guides, and resources

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.

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), coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related 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) Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (UW-855) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related 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)