

## **HISTORY 201: The Historians Craft African Decolonization**

Professor: Emily Callaci

[ejcallaci@wisc.edu](mailto:ejcallaci@wisc.edu)

Course Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45am

Class Location: 4008 Vilas Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-1:30

Office: 5125 Mosse Humanities Building

TA: Yue Qiu, [qiu86@wisc.edu](mailto:qiu86@wisc.edu)

Office hours: Thursdays 11-12, Friday 9:45-10:45

Office: 4274 Mosse Humanities Building

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

African decolonization is often defined as the transfer of political sovereignty from European colonizers to independent African nations. Yet, even as formal decolonization was unfolding, many African activists, intellectuals and artists expressed more ambitious visions of what decolonization meant. For example, some argued that decolonization required the creation of a more just economic order. For others, it meant the dissolving of colonial boundaries to create a pan-African community. For some, decolonization was about liberating the mind, while some argued that the true target of decolonization was land. This course invites students to explore the history of decolonization in Africa as a moment of possibilities. We will consider a range of primary sources, including political manifestoes, philosophical texts, works of art, films and works of literature. Additionally, we will spend a portion of the class conducting original research at the Wisconsin Historical Society, pondering the place of UW Madison in the history of colonialism and decolonization.

This intermediate level course comes with the COMMUNICATIONS A requisite, meets the Gen Ed Communication part B requirement, fulfills the Humanities breadth requirement, and counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S. The course meets in person and consists of substantial interaction between professor and student, including through weekly seminar discussions and activities and frequent feedback on writing and other assignments.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Accurately summarize the history of colonial rule and its end in Africa,
- Identify the differences and similarities between various forms of anti-colonial thought and action,
- Compare and contrast how different African individuals and communities have defined decolonization,
- Analyze and assess the ongoing legacies of colonialism,
- Analyze the role of colonialism and decolonization in shaping the contemporary world order.

Additionally, **this course fulfills the General Education COMM B requirement.** As such, students in this course will acquire the following skills:

- formulate strong research questions
- find and identify historical sources
- evaluate primary sources
- develop and present an argument
- communicate research findings effectively

#### COURSE FORMAT:

In order to meet the learning goals listed above, this course combines short lectures, in-class activities, discussions facilitated by a TA, and a final research project. This semester is organized into three modules:

**Module one** is designed like a conventional history course introducing students to the history of decolonization in Africa. By the end of this module, students should be able to answer the following questions: What was colonialism? What were its different manifestations across the continent? What were different modes of anti-colonial action and thought? How did African communities imagine decolonization? What are the ongoing legacies of colonialism in Africa? How are contemporary social justice movements in Africa building on, or departing from, the earlier histories of decolonization?

To complete this module, students will produce the following:

- five open-book, untimed quizzes (available on Canvas). These quizzes are meant to help you synthesize the material we are reading in class, so that we build a strong foundation of background historical knowledge. Quizzes are due by Friday at 5pm.

- in-class primary source analysis activities, which students will complete during class session. These are ungraded.
- a 3-4 page paper comparing and contrasting the ideas of at least two African anti-colonial intellectuals, building on assigned readings, in-class primary source analysis activities, and discussions.

In **Module Two**, we will explore debates about ongoing legacies of colonialism and decolonization in contemporary Africa. This semester, we will focus on three topics: debt and economic justice; the repatriation and restitution of African art; and environmental justice and the case for climate reparations.

To complete this module, students will produce the following:

- in-class discussion and activities
- a 3-page op-ed essay, using historical analysis to shed light on one of these contemporary issues

In **Module Three**, we will focus on apartheid South Africa, the global anti-apartheid movement and specifically, the campaign to convince universities to boycott and divest from South Africa. This module will allow you to gain hands-on experience doing original archival research, which is one of the goals of the Historian's Craft courses. It will also be an opportunity for us to explore one way that our own institution fits into the history of decolonization that we've been studying.

To complete this module, students will produce the following:

- in-class discussion and reading responses
- primary source worksheets analyzing sources from the Wisconsin Historical Society
- a 3-4 page essay based on primary sources

In case it is not clear from the above, this course consists of regular and substantive interaction between me, the professor, the TA, and you, the students. Forms of interaction in this course include the following:

- direct instruction through in-class lectures
- class discussions and group activities facilitated by the professor during class
- discussions and collaborative work during discussion sections facilitated by the TA
- feedback on written work from the professor and TA
- weekly office hours

## **Final Projects:**

Students will have three options for a final project. In all versions, students should aim to write around 1500 words and should include a bibliography with at least 5 scholarly sources.

Option 1, Decolonization Playlist: create a playlist of ten songs that tell the story of decolonization in Africa, along with liner notes explaining why you chose the songs you chose, biographical notes about the musicians, and the historical context for each selection.

Option 2, African Political Cartoon: Political cartoons, and humor in general, is notoriously difficult to understand across time and space. Our late UW colleague Tejumola Olaniyan created a database of African political cartoons, featuring cartoonists from around the continent.

<https://africacartoons.com>

Find a political cartoon that you don't understand and then conduct historical research to help explain the source. Write an essay explaining what you learned, and what the cartoon means.

Option 3, Film Review: imagine you are on the committee of the Wisconsin Film Festival and have been charged with choosing 1 or 2 African films to feature on the program, relating to the theme of decolonization. Write the "program notes" to help the audience understand the historical context of the film, as well as the biography and perspective of the filmmaker.

## **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.

As an historian, I recognize that my profession has privileged certain people and excluded others—both in terms of the people who hold jobs as history professors, and in terms of the perspectives and experiences that have been deemed worthy of historical inquiry. I also acknowledge that the University of Wisconsin-Madison itself occupies the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk, a place their nation has called Teejop. In an 1832 treaty, the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede this territory. While we cannot undo all forms of historical injustice in a single course, we recognize our ongoing obligation to foster a more just and inclusive university, and within it, a more just and inclusive discipline of History. In July 1990, when Nelson Mandela, newly released was touring the United States raising support for the cause of multi-racial democracy in South Africa, he ended his tour in Oakland, CA where in his speech, he made special reference to the political cause of American Indians, "the first American nation." Following his lead, in this course about decolonization, we will always keep in mind the connection between colonialism "over there" and the processes of decolonization still going on here at home.

We must start by educating ourselves about how our institution, UW Madison, fits into histories of exclusion. Towards that end, I encourage all students to take the time to visit the online exhibition [Sifting and Reckoning](#), which explores UW's history of exclusion and resistance.

As a professor, I take seriously my responsibility to create a safe learning environment where all students can participate in open and honest dialogue with one another. I expect all members of the seminar to contribute to a learning atmosphere that is respectful and inclusive, and which recognizes the dignity of each member. I welcome disagreement and varying viewpoints as a productive and necessary part of intellectual inquiry, and I expect seminar members to express disagreement in a respectful way.

### **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](#))

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each lecture counts as 1.5 hours and each discussion counts as an hour). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

### **GRADING CRITERIA**

Your grade is based on a 100-point scale, which translates to the following letter grades:

A = 93-100%  
AB = 88-92%  
B = 83-87%  
BC = 78-82%  
C = 70-77  
F=-69

**5 Quizzes: 20 points (4 points each)**

**3 Essays: 45 points total (15 points each)**

**Final project: 15 points**

**In-class assignments: 10 points (includes primary source analysis activities and research worksheets. These are ungraded, so if you complete them all, you will receive 10 points.)**

**Discussion Section Participation: 10 points**

#### ASSIGNED READINGS:

We will read several chapters of *Africa in Global History*, by Robert Harms. You may purchase the e-book version or use the pdfs that I will provide on Canvas. All other readings will be available on Canvas or on course reserve. All readings are due on the day under which they are listed on the syllabus.

You can find all the information you need about the course on our Canvas site.

#### RESOURCES AND POLICIES

##### *Office Hours:*

I encourage you all to come to my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or your academic program. These hours are set aside specifically for your benefit, and I really hope to see you there! I am available both in person in my office or remotely, via Zoom.

##### *Academic Honesty:*

The University of Wisconsin takes matters of academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism is a very serious offense that can pose a real threat to your success and to the integrity of our broader learning community. I will strictly enforce the university policies on academic honesty. The rules about plagiarism can sometimes be confusing. If you are unsure about them, 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 come speak to me during office hours. Ignorance of the definition 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>

### *Writing Resources:*

Your TA will be available to advise you on writing assignments for this course. Additionally, I encourage you to make use of the resources and services available through the History Lab. The History Lab is a resource where expert PhD students work with you and your history/history of science 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 <http://go.wisc.edu/HLAB> early and often to schedule an appointment with a Lab TA or to find writing tips, guides, and resources.

**DoIT Help Desk** – If you have questions about Canvas, BBCollaborate, Zoom or other platforms supported by UW, you can contact the DoIT Help

Desk: <https://it.wisc.edu/services/help-desk/>. They can also guide students to resources for help with bandwidth issues.

### SCHEDULE:

#### **Week 1: Welcome**

Thursday Sept 4: Introductions

#### **Week 2: What is colonialism? What forms did it take in Africa?**

Listen: Thomas Mapfumo, [Hokoyo!](#)

Tuesday Sept 9: Colonial Conquest

Read:

1. Robert Harms, *Africa in Global History*, 379-412 (Chapter 10)
2. E.D. Morel, *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade Flourishing on the Congo in the Year of Grace 1906*, (London: T. Fisher Urwin, 1907), 43-59.

Thursday Sept 11: Forms of Colonial Rule

Read:

1. Harms, 421- 454 (Chapters 11)

Due Friday, 5pm: Canvas Quiz #1

#### **Week 3: Colonialism and Nationalism**

Listen: [Independence Cha Cha](#) (Joseph Kabasele Tshamala)

Tuesday Sept 16: World War II, Resistance and African Nationalism

Read:

1. Harms 507-514, 523-535 (Chapter 13 excerpts)
2. Cheryl Johnson-Odim, "For their Freedoms: The anti-imperialist and international feminist activity of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria," *Women's Studies International Forum* 32 (2009), 51-59.

Thursday Sept 18: Independence Movements

Read:

1. Harms, 549-584 (Chapter 14)
2. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Emancipate Your Husbands! Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58," *Women in Colonial African Histories*, eds. Geiger, Musisi and Allman, (Indiana University Press, 2002), 282-298.

Due Friday, 5pm: Canvas Quiz #2

#### **Week 4: Liberation Struggles**

Listen: Baloji, [Le Jour d'Après \(Independance Cha Cha\)](#)

Tuesday Sept 23: Case Study: Mau Mau

Read:

1. Wambui Otieno, *Mau Mau's Daughter: A Life History*, (Lynne Rienner, 1998), 33-47
2. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature," *Decolonizing the Mind*, (James Currey, 1986), 4-30

Thursday Sept 25: National Culture

Read:

1. Franz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148-205
2. Chinua Achebe, "English and the African Writer," *Transition*, 1965, 342-349

Due Friday, 5pm: Canvas Quiz #3

#### **Week 5: Decolonization and Worldmaking**

Listen: E.T. Mensah, [Ghana, Guinea Mali](#)

Tuesday September 30: Development, Nation-building, World-making

Read:

1. Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, (New York: International Publishers, 1965), ix-xx, 84-109

2. Ama Ata Aidoo, "For Whom Things Did Not Change," *No Sweetness Here*, (1969), 8-29.
3. Julius Nyerere, "The Arusha Declaration" (1967) and "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism"

Thursday October 2: Separatism, Federalism

Read:

1. Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 143-174
2. Elechi Amadi, *Sunset in Biafra: A Civil War Diary*, 47-59

Bonus: Watch *Lumumba, la mort d'un prophète*, (Raoul Peck, 1990, available on Kanopy)

Due Friday, 5pm: Canvas Quiz #4

Due in Discussion Sections: thesis statements for Essay #1, for peer review

## **Week 6: The Cold War and the Postcolony**

Listen: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, [Shuffering and Shmiling](#)  
And [International Thief Thief](#)

Tuesday October 7: The Cold War and Late Decolonizations

Read:

1. Harms, Chapter 15, 590-624.
2. Marissa Moorman, "Radio as a Form of struggle: scenes from late colonial Angola," *The Conversation*

## **Module 2: Beyond Independence: from decolonization to reparations**

Thursday October 9: From NIEO to Structural Adjustment

Read:

1. Thomas Sankara, "A United Front Against Debt," speech at the Organization of African Unity, July 1987

Watch:

Film, Thomas Sankara, *The Upright Man*, (ZORN Production, 2006) (available to stream on Kanopy, through the UW Madison library website)

Due in discussion sections: first draft of paper #1 for peer-review

Due Friday, 5pm: Canvas Quiz #5

## **Week 7: African Art and the Politics of Repatriation**

Listen: [Toumani Diabaté, Si naani](#)

Due Monday October 13, 5pm: Paper #1

Tuesday October 14:

Read:

1. David Frum, "Who Benefits when Western Museums return looted objects?" *The Atlantic*, October 2022
2. Julian Lucas, "The Forgotten Movement to Reclaim Africa's Stolen Art," *The New Yorker*, April 14, 2022
3. Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (2020), 1-17

Thursday October 16: Visit to the Chazen Museum, lecture and discussion by chief curator Katherine Alcauskas

### **Week 8: Slow Violence and Environmentalism**

Listen: [Remmy Ongala, Nasikitika](#)

Tuesday October 21: Health and Toxicity

Read:

Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, "Introduction" 1-44 and "Pipe Dreams: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Environmental Justice and Micro-minority Rights," 103-127

Thursday October 23: Decolonization, Environmentalism and Climate Reparations

Read:

1. Nina Lakhani, "Africa is on the Front Lines but Not the Front Pages: Vanessa Nakate on her Climate Fight," *The Guardian*, September 17, 2022.
2. Rob Nixon, "Slow Violence, Gender and the Environmentalism of the Poor," 128-149

Watch/Listen:

[Wangari Mathai's Nobel Prize lecture](#)

### **Module 3: South Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle**

#### **Week 9: Segregation in South Africa**

Listen: Miriam Makeba, ["Beware Verwoed!"](#)

Tuesday October 28: South Africa and the creation of apartheid

Read:

The following selections from *A South Africa Reader*, eds. Clifton Crais and Thomas McClendon, (Duke, 2013):

1. Crais and McClendon, "United and Divided," 197-200
2. Crais and McClendon, "Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom," 279-283,
3. Congress of the People, "Freedom Charter," 320-324
4. ANC Women's League, "Repeal the Pass Laws!" 298-300

Thursday October 30: the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa

Read:

1. Crais and McClendon, "From Soweto to Liberation," 357-360
2. Steve Biko, "White Racism and Black Consciousness," 361-370

Watch:

*You Have Struck a Rock!* (dir. Deborah May, 1981, available on Kanopy)

Due Friday in discussions: draft of paper #2 for peer review

### **Week 10:**

Listen: Gil Scott Heron, ["Johannesburg"](#)

Due Monday November 3, 5pm: paper #2

Tuesday November 4: Global Divestment movement

Read:

Amanda Joyce Hall, "Students are the Spark: Anti-Apartheid in the Long 1980s," *Journal of African American History* 108 (3), 2023.

Thursday November 6: Wisconsin in the anti-Apartheid movement

Listen:

WPR, Wisconsin Today, "UW-Madison's anti-apartheid and divestment history," May 22, 2024

Read:

Gay Seidman, "Divestment Dynamics: Mobilizing, Shaming and Changing the Rules," *Social Research* 4 (82), Winter 2015, 1015-1037.

### **Week 11**

Listen: Brenda Fassie ["Black President"](#)

Tuesday November 11: The End of Apartheid

Read:

Magaziner, Daniel, and Sean Jacobs. "Notes from Marikana, South Africa: The Platinum Miners' Strike, the Massacre, and the Struggle for Equivalence." *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 83 (2013): 137-42.

Thursday November 13: Workshop papers

### **Module 4: Final Research Projects**

#### **Week 12**

Due Monday November 17: short paper #3

Tuesday November 18: Is Decolonization Over?

Thursday November 20: no class

#### **Week 13**

Tuesday November 25: no class

Thursday November 27: Thanksgiving

#### **Week 14**

Tuesday December 2: research workshop, individual meetings

Thursday December 4: research workshop, individual meetings

#### **Week 15**

Tuesday December 9: Evaluation, Final discussion and Final Self- Assessment

Due Monday December 15: Essay #3