

Introduction to the History of Africa (since 1880)

AS.100.122

Fall 2022
Professor [D. Gondola](#)
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READ THIS CAREFULLY AND REFER TO IT AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY

Nota bene: This syllabus and other course materials can be found on the web page (<https://canvas.jhu.edu>).

Course Description

One of the most important issues in modern African history is the extent to which European colonization impacted African societies and cultures. Was colonization a major rupture or a parenthesis? Have African communities managed to preserve some of their precolonial traditions despite the colonial onslaught? Are African societies still influenced by the colonial legacy? And, to begin with, has Africa really been decolonized? Those are some of the questions this course will attempt to address. It will examine present African societies, with a focus on West Africa and Central Africa considering the ruptures and continuities of the past and the present. In addition, this course gives a historical and interdisciplinary perspective on African continuities and changes. It attempts to balance broad themes with individual case studies. Students are expected to participate actively in the formulation of knowledge about Africa. This course is also designed to develop student skills of critical and comparative analysis, improve writing proficiency, and enhance one's capacity to organize and express his or her thoughts. Students will sharpen these skills through research-driven writing assignments and discussion. There will be required content for reading or viewing—historical documents, short film documentaries, and contemporary primary sources (news, analysis, etc.) which take a historical perspective on a current event.

Learning Objectives

- Understand Africa's geographic, social, and political diversity
- Demonstrate the ability to use primary sources to craft narratives about causality and change in African history
- Identify major themes, key events, people, and places in Africa's modern and contemporary trajectory
- Analyze significant impact of European colonization on African history and contrast alternative interpretations of historical events

Requirements and Evaluation

Nota Bene: There are no make-ups and no extra-credit assignments in this class. Written Assignments must be turned in on the day they are due. Any late assignment will not be graded. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Assignment	Due Date	%
Individual Book Report <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (1,000-1,200 words)		20%
Collaborative Research Oral Presentation		10%
Collaborative Research First Draft		10%
Mid Term (Canvas)		20%
Collaborative Research Final Submission		20%
Final Exam (Canvas)		20%
Total		100%

Books [Each student should purchase and read according to the schedule dates the book(s) required]

All required readings for the course are available on Canvas. We strongly recommend that you read the rea assigned at least twice before coming to class. Make notes in your texts or on a separate sheet of paper and highlight or underline the specific passages you want to discuss.

Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*.

<https://www.amazon.com/Things-Fall-Apart-Chinua-Achebe/dp/0385474547> [used ones are as low as \$2]

Class Attendance

Students are required to attend class sessions on a regular basis. You should show up on time and keep any scheduled assignment. If for extraordinary reasons you anticipate being unable to meet a deadline, we strongly suggest you make an appointment with us beforehand (if at all possible) to discuss your particular situation.

Class Participation

The physical or virtual classroom is an environment of learning *par excellence*. Not only do students learn from the instructor and by their own critical analysis of the material but they also learn from fellow students. It is, of course, an intimate and ever-changing space where students are constantly asked to share opinions and critically analyze the issues as they are being presented by the instructor and fellow students. Participation in class discussions is instrumental in the student’s ability to analyze and assimilate information. Do not feel shy to ask a question, raise an issue or interject a thought. There are several ways to get prepared for class discussions. Here are some tips on how you can enrich discussion of the course materials: (1) Spend time before each class preparing for discussion by making notes in your texts or on a separate sheet of paper pertaining to specific passages from the readings that you want to discuss. (2) During class discussions, when raising a question or point about the assigned readings, make specific references to texts, authors and page numbers in question. (3) Listen carefully to an interlocutor’s question and position before responding and making your own comment. Try not to make assumptions about your interlocutor’s intentions or motivations based on his/her/their gender or origin. Never hesitate to ask your interlocutor to clarify or restate her/his/their position.

Student Presentation

The purpose of the presentation is to encourage critical reading and thinking, and collaboration. Because this presentation is scheduled a few weeks before the submission of the first draft of your written collaborative research project and given the short timeframe allowed for presentation (15-20 minutes), you should think of it as a test balloon. Present your topic, tell us why you selected the topic, the research you have conducted thus far, how you plan to organize your ideas, the challenges you are facing, etc. In other words, present a blueprint of your research and expect some substantive and constructive feedback from the class.

Paper Grading Policy

We believe that a grade is less a reward for or a penalty against the student's intelligence than a reflection of the student's proficiency to write clearly and persuasively a paper on a given topic. Organization and pertinence of ideas, as well as grammar and clarity, are among some the chief criteria we use in grading a paper. We give the following grades:

- A. means that the paper is written with grace and clarity. The student has demonstrated mastery in writing clearly and organizing ideas methodically on a given topic. Ideas are not randomly thrown here and there but are complementary and cohesive elements of a well-organized paper.
- B. is above average. Ideas flow well. Grammatical errors are minimal.
- C. is for an average paper that complies with the topic assigned or chosen. The student has done just what I asked for. Grammar is fair and content is intelligible.
- D. is for a paper written with a level of grammatical errors that sometimes hinders the comprehension. Ideas exist but are arranged without a clear logic. Some of them are obscure and unintelligible. Sentences are confusing...
- F. is for a paper quickly and poorly written, with incomplete sentences, and often off-subject. This grade signifies an unacceptable performance in writing a specific assignment. Usually, the content can hardly be grasped because of a lack of clarity and organization.

Here is my grading chart:

Letters	Numbers	Letters	Numbers	Letters	Numbers	Letters	Numbers
A+	97-100	B+	85-88	C+	73-76	D+	61-64
A	93-96	B	81-84	C	69-72	D	57-60
A-	89-92	B-	77-80	C-	65-68	D-	53-56
						F	52

Here are some writing tips:

1. "Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style" (Matthew Arnold).
2. "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity" (George Orwell).
3. When writing a paper, do not make unsupported assertions. Try to present the most convincing case for your argument. Think carefully and thoroughly about the evidence you will use to support your position. Always anticipate opposing critiques of your position and

opposing arguments. Try to answer or address opposing positions as you present your own position. This will demonstrate that you are aware of alternative viewpoints and that you are capable of proposing and defending a thesis.

4. Your paper should not be a first-draft presentation and organization of your thoughts. Give yourself ample time to read the assigned materials and to consult appropriate sources before making final decisions about your thesis statement and the supporting evidence, which will provide structure for your argument and conclusion. For example, you might begin writing your final paper by making very strong statements about a point you aim at defending. However, in consulting the works of scholars in the field, you may see the need to modify your original thesis, or you may be compelled to abandon it altogether. This is to be expected in scholarly research and writing. You should not feel reluctant to change your argument if your reasons for changing it are more convincing than your original reasons for posing it.
5. Please take advantage of all the resources available to you when planning to write your paper. Never hesitate to ask reference librarians for help in trying to locate scholarly sources. Never hesitate to ask us for extra help in thinking through your ideas for the paper. Discussing a topic before researching and writing can help you think of new ideas and new approaches and sources. It can also save time.
6. Always use page numbering and a 12 inch-font. Do not hesitate to use footnotes if you think they might clarify your demonstration. A bibliography should always figure at the end of your paper. Double-spacing is a requirement.
7. Last but not least, always proofread your paper before you hand it in to be graded. Not only does proofread help rid your paper of any grammatical errors and typos that can make its content less comprehensible and appealing, but it also helps to consider re-wording a sentence or improving an existing idea. Proofreading can make a difference in your grade.

Student Dishonesty

1. Cheating

“A Student must not submit substantial portions of the same academic work for credit or honors more than once without permission of the instructor to whom the work is being submitted.”

This is one among many forms of cheating. For more details, please refer to the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conducts*.

2. plagiarize \vb –rized; -riz.ing vt [plagiarist] (1716)

: to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own

: use (a created production) without crediting the source ~ vi : to

commit literary theft : present as new and original an idea or product

derived from an existing source — **plagiarist** n

— From the *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition, 1997, p. 888.

We have entered an age where the amount of information generated and the technology available to retrieve it have made it easier for anybody to take *verbatim* words and ideas belonging to somebody else, without the author’s permission, without reference to the authorship, and by passing them as his or her own. This is unacceptable, especially in the academic environment where copyright laws are supposed to be known and respected by all. Please always abide by the following rules:

- a. Never use an idea that you have borrowed, without referring to the authorship.
- b. Figures, when not your own, should always be referenced.
- c. There is nothing wrong in inserting quotes in your work, but always give the source (author, work, date and place of publication, publisher and page number)

While it is hard for some of us to assimilate that words and ideas are also property and as such are subject to copyright laws, we should always remember the Golden Rule. Canvas has also a unique agreement with "Turnitin.com" that allows faculty to run electronic papers submitted by students through this document search utility. **We have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and will give a grade "0" to any plagiarized assignment and report the student to the Office of the Director of Student Conduct.**

Civility Statement. The physical and virtual classroom is a learning community in which we all need to collaborate in order to meet our goals. We can only create a positive learning environment through positive speech and positive behavior. Rude, sarcastic, obscene, disrespectful, insensitive speech and behavior will negatively impact the classroom learning community and impede the process of learning. Positive speech and behavior create and nurture a safe learning environment where the instructor and the students respect one another and freely share knowledge. All students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to create and maintain a safe and positive environment conducive to learning and intellectual growth. A learning-friendly and safe environment is one that is free of distractions, engages and nurtures all participants in the learning process, does not inhibit, frustrate, demean or dehumanize any individual or group. Students who use rude and inflammatory language, who distract other students, who engage in inappropriate behavior, and thus obstruct the learning process, will be asked to leave as a first preventive step.

1. Introduction to the Course

- August 30: Introduction
- September 1: African History: Myths and Stereotypes
Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*
Keim, “Changing our Mind about Africa”
- 6: “Darkest Africa” and the Hamitic Hypothesis
Curtin: “Africans, Place in Nature”
Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origins and Functions in Time Perspective”

2. Precolonial African Civilizations?

- September 8: The Diversity of Africa (People, Cultures, and Civilizations)
Watch: History of Africa with Zeinab Badawi (Episode 1) | Mother Africa
- 13: Great Zimbabwe
Ndoro, “Great Zimbabwe”
Carroll, “Solomonic Legend: The Muslims and the Great Zimbabwe”
- September 15: The Empire of Mali and Islam
Levtzion, “The Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Kings of Mali”
Cartwright, “The Spread of Islam in Ancient Africa”
- 20: Kongo and Portugal
Brinkman, “Kongo Interpreters, Traveling Priests, and Political Leaders in the Kongo Kingdom (15th - 19th Centuries)”
Watch: Africa with Zeinab Badawi (Episode 19) | Kongo and the Scramble for Africa

3. Student Collaborative Research Presentations

- September 22-19
STUDENT RESEARCH
PRESENTATIONS
DUE (10%)
- 22: Student Research Presentations
27: Student Research Presentations
29: Student Research Presentations

4. Colonial Conquest and Resistance

- 4: The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave System
Miers and Roberts, “The End of Slavery in Africa”
Watch: History of Africa with Zeinab Badawi (Episode 19, 10^o to 17^o) | Kongo and the Scramble for Africa
- October 6: Shifting Global Interests in Africa
October 6
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH
DRAFT DUE (10%)
- Getz**, Chapter 2: “African Voices of the Industrial Revolution”
Watch: Africa with Zeinab Badawi (Episode 19, 13^o to End) | Kongo and the Scramble for Africa
- 11: Leopold II and Congo’s Red Rubber
Weisbord, “The King, the Cardinal and the Pope: Leopold II’s Genocide in the Congo and the Vatican”

Watch: Africa with Zeinab Badawi (Episode 20, Beginning to 16' to) | Resistance and Liberation

October 13: Discussion: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

October 18
FIRST EXAM (20%)

18: **FIRST EXAM (20%)**

October 20: **FALL BREAK**

5. Colonization and Change

October 25
Things Fall Apart Book
Report DUE (20%)

25: Urban Life, Education and Religion under Colonial Rule

Njoh: "Urban Space and Racial Segregation"

Book Report, *Things Fall Apart*, Due (10%)

27: Imperial Economies and African Life

Khapoya: "Colonialism and the African Experience"

November 1: South Africa and the Roots of Apartheid

MacKinnon, Chapter IX: "Apartheid and South African Society"

6. Two Case Studies: Ethiopia and Liberia

3: Ethiopia's Exceptionalism

Carmichael, Chapter 3: "African Voices of the Colonial Era, ca. 1896-1945"

Tibebu, "Ethiopia: The 'Anomaly' and 'Paradox' of Africa"

8: Liberia: America's Stepchild

Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia"

Watch: "Liberia: America's Stepchild"

7. Decolonization and Postcolonial Trajectories

10. Nationalism and Panafricanism

Adebayo, Chapter 5: "African Voices of the Fight for Independence, ca. 1880-1994"

Kasanda, "Pan-Africanism's Theories"

15: Development Issues in Africa

Rodney: Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa

Adisa, "Political Opportunism, Corruption and Underdevelopment in Africa"

Watch: Blood Coltan: The Democratic Republic of Congo

17: China in Africa

Taylor: "China's Foreign Policy in Africa"

Michel, "When China Met Africa"

Watch: "Guangzhou Dream Factory" (Kanopy Film)

NOVEMBER 21-25: FALL RECESS

8. Postcolonial Challenges

	29:	Ethnic Conflict: Understanding the Rwandan Genocide Blanton , "Postcolonial Ethnic Conflicts" Newbury , Understanding Genocide
December	1:	Discussion: Africa's Boundaries and Languages Herbst , "Africa's Boundaries" Achebe , "English and the African Writer" Ngugi was Thiong'o and C. Cantalupo , "African Literature... Says Who?"
December	6:	Recolonize Africa? Richburg , "Retreat" Pfaff , "A New Colonialism? Europe Must Go Back to Africa"
December 6 COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PAPER DUE (20%)		
	8:	Africa Is Rising! Watch: "Africa Open for Business" (Kanopy Film)
December 15 FINAL EXAM (20%)		
December	15:	FINAL EXAM (20%)

NOTES: