2014

African History 2

Kathleen Smythe
smythe@xavier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_spring_2014

Recommended Citation
http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_spring_2014/23
COURSE DESCRIPTION:
We begin the second half of the African history course by examining initial contacts between Europeans and Africans in the late 15th century. In the ensuing decades, trade in slaves, minerals, and raw materials forged links between Europe, Africa, and the Americas through commerce, genetics, and culture. Following the collapse of the international slave trade, internal African slave trades increased. Not much later came European colonialism. This era was relatively brief but profound in terms of the changes it brought to African societies. Throughout the course, the focus will be on continuity and transformation in African societies as they became increasingly tied to global politics and economics.

The chief question of the course comes from Donald Wright’s book on Niumi in The Gambia. In the Introduction to the first edition, he asks the deceptively powerful question: What went awry [in The Gambia to cause their economy (among other things) to be so out of whack]? In essence, what he was asking was “How do we explain how The Gambia became a developing country while other countries developed and industrialized?” His answer lay then in world systems theory. In the second edition he analyzed Niumi’s history in light of globalization and in the third edition that you have for this class, he re-assessed both of these analyses in light of Gambian politics and leadership.

Wright’s re-appraisals of the situation and the big questions he asks himself and the evidence from The Gambia offer us an excellent way to tie together all the course material. To that end, we will take three weeks of class to dig into Niumi’s history and to ask ourselves three questions:
1. What went awry during this time period, if anything? In other words, how much local political and economic control was exerted? How much did foreigners or foreign places exert control in Niumi? What significant changes occurred to these dynamics during this time period?
2. Are there other events that are as important or more important during this time period in terms of understanding’s Niumi’s relative well-being?
3. Do you think there is a more important question to ask than “What went awry during this time period?” If so, what is it?

Course Learning Outcomes:
Students who fully engage and participate in the class will be able to
1. Create an historical argument and defend it with historical evidence (Department SLO 5; also Core SLO Magis)
2. Express historical arguments clearly and persuasively (History Department SLO 3; also Core SLO Magis)
3. Understand the past on its own terms: develop images of Africa and Africans that accurately reflect historical and contemporary life on the continent (History Department SLO 2; also Core SLO: Solidarity and Kinship)
4. Examine the interconnections between humans and the natural environment (Core SLO: Solidarity and Kinship)
5. Examine the diverse, complex, and interdependent nature of people in the world (Core SLO: Solidarity and Kinship)
6. Investigate the root causes of injustice with compassion and academic rigor (Core SLO: Service Rooted in Justice and Love)
7. Become, if you are not already, an active participant in your own education. I fantasize about being involved in a co-learning process but have yet to find a relatively convenient way to make that happen given current constraints. Any ideas welcome. (Smythe SLO)

**Books:**
David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
Kathleen Smythe, *Africa’s Past and Our Future*
Donald Wright, *The World and A Very Small Place in Africa*
Additional readings on e-reserve

**Requirements:**
Reading quizzes/Assignments: individual (5%): These will assess your basic understanding of the MAIN concepts in a given reading assignment. (CLOs 1-7)

Reading quizzes/Assignments: group (10%): Same content as individual quizzes/assignments. (CLOs 1-7)

Scholarly Article/Text (25%): There are three scholarly article/text assignments (10%, 15%) throughout the semester in addition to other readings. (CLOs 1-5)
The first assignment will be oral and done as a group (SA #1, due Jan. 23).

On-campus event (10%): Twice in the semester (before February 13 and March 18) you will attend an event on campus and write a one-page response that explains the event briefly and then connects to one or more classes you are currently taking. (CLOs 5 -7)

Newspaper Project (15%): You will regularly read the news from a U.S. newspaper (*The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune* or *The Los Angeles Times*). Choose a country, topic, or event to focus on throughout the semester.
Two times in the semester (5%, 10%) you will be asked to reflect on the newspaper coverage in light of your study of more recent African history. A rubric will be distributed to assist in your response.
Each time you will share the content of your article, show the class the location on the map, tell us why you think it is important, and how it links to the rest of the class.
You might consider investigating on the of the following themes or countries that will have a direct link to class content: neo-colonialism, development (aid and generally), colonial legacies/impacts (could be political, economic, social, psychological), globalized trade, modern day slavery in Africa, economic inequality, The Gambia, Kenya, South Africa, Somaliland, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Tanzania. (CLOs 5-7)

Final assignment (35%): Based on all the material in class besides Wright’s book, using the questions that we developed as a class from reading Wright's book, which question do you think
is the most important to ask and how might you go about answering it in 2000 words? There will be several steps to this project. (CLOs 5-7)

The first will take place as your group prepares to discuss one chapter (or two) in Wright but it will be done individually.

The second (FA #2) will be due right after Easter Break on April 22nd and will be your selection of your important question and your rationale for it. In class on April 24th you will have a chance to evaluate all of the questions (with names deleted) and to give feedback on which questions seem the most interesting/fruitful, etc. to explore. That feedback combined with the professor's feedback you may then use to hone your question so that you can begin writing the answer. Both the question and the answer will be part of your final assignment for the class.

FA #3 is your 2000 word response (6-7 pages) to your own question about the past 500 years of African history.

Other Things You Should Know:

**Writing:** Writing is too important a skill to be learned only in English classes. Expressing yourself clearly in writing is an essential skill for almost any subject and career. As a result, I will pay careful attention to not only the historical data and argument that you make in your essays and exams but also to the way in which you write. I believe that learning to write well is a process, not a task completed and perfected in a short amount of time. To that end, you may re-write some of your assignments within a week of receiving the graded original if you do the following. First, meet with another student in the class (preferably one who is more confident in his/her writing skills than you) to discuss your paper and suggest substantive changes. Second, approach your work as an outside reader, revising, rearranging, and making substantive changes. Then, based on your changes, those suggested by your peer, and those suggested by me, rewrite your essay. You must turn in your first essay, your revised essay and a typed cover letter describing how the paper has benefited from the changes from all three sources. In particular, I want a clear and specific description of how your own editing changed your writing. The final grade for the assignment will be an average of the two grades.

**Attendance Policy:** When I was a college student, a professor once remarked (in disgust), that education is one service that people pay a lot for and then don’t mind if they are cheated. He was referring to the fact that some students purposefully skip classes or sign up for easy classes and do not think about the fact that when they do so they are wasting the money that someone is investing in their education. Just as I believe that education is worthwhile only if it challenges and pushes you, I also believe that class attendance is important in order to get the most out of your education. Regular attendance enables you to experience the course in all its richness and diversity. Regular attendance also teaches responsibility. Obviously, there some circumstances that will necessitate your missing class. I ask that when this happens you notify me as soon as possible regarding your absence. **Four or more unexplained absences will mean that you fail the class.**

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:** The University has a policy on academic honesty as stated on page 54 of the 2006-2008 Catalog.

“The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier
University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation.

All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own.

**Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from the University.”**

---

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>62% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

The readings and questions listed after each day are to be done BEFORE the class period. If just an author and title is noted for the reading (with little other information), it comes from one of your texts. If a fuller citation is used, the article or chapter can be found on e-reserve. The e-reserve password for this class is “africa”. E-reserve materials can be found on the library’s web page. They can also be found through the portal. Please report any difficulties with locating e-reserve materials to me as soon as possible.

BRING READINGS TO CLASS! We will use them almost every day.

---

**Introduction**

January 14: Introduction to class
Reading in class: Wright, *The World And A Very Small Place in Africa*, Introduction

**Section 1: The Atlantic Age c. 1450-1880**

Over the course of four hundred years, the economic and, to a lesser extent, cultural and political prospects of Africans and Europeans and Americans intertwined. Our focus will be on exploring African responses to the trade in slaves that dominated the era. The external slave trade came to an end in the early nineteenth century, another external development that Africans responded to in a variety of ways.
January 16: Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa
Reading: Smythe, *Africa’s Past and Our Future*, ch. 7
Quiz #1

January 21: Specific African experiences of slavery and slave trade

January 23: Scholarly article team presentations
*Scholarly article team presentation due (SA #1)*

January 28: Nineteenth Century—Abolition of the Slave Trade
*Newspaper*

January 30: NO CLASS

February 4: Nineteenth Century—Islam
Reading: Gilbert and Reynolds, pp. 210-218
*Newspaper*

February 6: Nineteenth Century—Intellectual and Cultural
Reading: Brizuela-Garcia and Getz, *Intellectual History and Cultural Nationalism in West Africa*
*Start reading Nervous Conditions*
Section 2: Colonialism 1880-1960
Less than 100 years after the end of the external slave trade, European economic interests had built to such an extent that they sought political control in Africa. In this and the next section, we will explore the complex dynamics of European colonization and African response with a focus on Kenya and South Africa.

February 11: Colonialism and African Resistance
Reading: Adu Boahen, “The Imposition of the Colonial System: Initiatives and Responses” 34-50
Newspaper

February 13: Colonialism—Political aspects
Reading: Handout: Views on Colonialism

February 18: Colonialism—Economic Aspects
Reading: Smythe, Africa’s Past and Our Future, ch. 8
Newspaper
Quiz #2

February 20: Colonialism—Cultural aspects
Reading: Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions

Section 3: Decolonization and Independence, 1960-present
Look at chapters and the way Shetler does it and put in colonialism section? And make sure have time to do immigration

February 25: The Case of Kenya
Reading: Anderson, Histories of the Hanged, ch. 1
Also see handout on Canvas
Assignment
OCE #1

February 27: Presentation on African Census work from HIST 350 students (Professor out of town at conference)
Reading: Anderson, Histories of the Hanged, ch. 2
Assignment
March 4 and 6: SPRING BREAK

March 11: The Case of Kenya
Reading: Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, chs. 3 and 4
Assignment
Newspaper

March 13: The Case of Kenya
Reading: Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, ch. 6
Assignment

March 18: The Case of Kenya
Reading: Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, chs. 7 and 8
OCE #2
Assignment

March 20: The Case of South Africa
Reading: Smythe, *Africa’s Past and Our Future*, ch. 9, pp. 1-14
Newspaper

March 25: The Case of South Africa
Reading: Something on Mandela
SA #2

Section 4: Africa’s Place in the World
This section is a reprise of what we have already covered and a chance to step back and make your own sense of Africa’s present in light of the past.

March 27: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question?
Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, chs. 1 and 2

April 1: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question?
Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, ch. 3
NP
FA #1 (Team 1)

April 3: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question?
Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, ch. 4
FA #1 (Team 2)
April 8: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question? 
Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, ch. 5 
*Newspaper* 
*FA #1 (Team 3)* 

April 10: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question? 
Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, ch. 6 
*FA #1 (Team 4)* 

April 15: One final look: What went awry? When? Or is there a better question? 
Reading: Reading: Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, chs. 7 & 8 
*FA #1 (Team 5)* 

April 17—EASTER BREAK 

April 22: The Informal Economy Or What do Africans know? 
Reading: Smythe, *Africa’s Past and Our Future*, ch. 9, pp. 15-end 
*Newspaper* 
*FA #2* 

April 24: Waithood and Arab Spring Or What do Africans know? 
Reading: Alice Honwana, “Youth, Waithood and Protest Movements in Africa”  
[http://africanarguments.org/](http://africanarguments.org/)  
*FA review in class* 

April 29: Modern Heterarchy Or What do Africans know? 
Reading: Smythe, *Africa’s Past and Our Future*, ch. 10 
*Quiz #3* 

May 1: Music Or What do Africans know? 
Reading/Research: Find a piece of music from the continent or influenced by the continent and be prepared to explain these connections to your group.
May 8: 8:30-10:20: FINAL EXAM Final assignment due 2000 word response (6 to 7 pages) to your own question about the past 500 years of African history.