2014

123-02 African History I - African History to 1400

Christian Strother
strotherc@xavier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_fall_2014

Recommended Citation
http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_fall_2014/28
African History I—African History to 1400  
History 123  
Xavier University  
Christian Strother  
Fall 2014

Office Hours: TR 10-12  
Office phone: 513-888-5648  
Email: strotherc@xavier.edu

Course Description: Few regions of the world can match the cultural diversity of the African continent. Yet, Africa is often spoken of as if it is a monolithic entity. The goal of this class is to allow students to engage with African history from five million years ago until the 15th century. I hope that each student leaves the course with a greater understanding of this often misunderstood region of the world.

Course Objectives: This course is intended as an introductory course to African History. The focus of this course is not only on African societies prior to 1500 but also on how this time period is studied by historians. The first objective of this course is for students to be introduced to the various methodologies used to study African societies, with emphasis placed on the use of oral tradition, archeological and linguistic evidence. The second objective is to place Africa into a regional and global history. This course will encourage students to examine how various African societies adapted to new ideas and technologies and to critically examine the idea of Africa as “partially isolated.”

Books:  
Jonathon Reynolds and Erik Gilbert, Africa in World History  
Sudiatna: An Epic of Old Mali  
Ross E. Dunn, The Adventures of Ibn Battutah: A Muslim Traveller of the 14th Century  
Additional readings on Blackboard

Requirements:

Assignments: 75% of final grade

Quizzes (10%): Each week, there will be a short quiz posted on Canvas covering the reading and the lectures for that week. Quizzes will focus on key concepts and themes discussed in the reading and during the lectures, so it is essential to do all of the class readings each week (there will be at least one question each week that comes from the readings and is not included in the lecture) and attend the lectures.

Short Essays (15%): You will be responsible for two 7 page papers (Chicago Style and double spaced). These should be based on the course readings and the two novels during the course. These two papers will be due October 21st and November 18th. Students should e-mail their papers to me at strotherc@xavier.edu and cc to chrstrother@gmail.com no later than 11:59 p.m.
on the due date. Rubrics for the essays will be posted on Blackboard along with a style guide for Chicago Style.

**Study Guide (10%)**: You will be expected to turn in the previous weeks study guides every Tuesday. The questions will be graded and are available for you to use while you take the quizzes so it is essential that try your best to answer each question. Study guides are a questions will be graded for accuracy so they needed to be uploaded to Canvas before class on Thursday. Any questions about the study guide will be answered in class so late submissions will not be accepted.

**Group Work (15%)**: Groups will be assigned at the beginning of the term. Group work will usually be conducted during the last thirty minutes of class every Thursday. Students will be given individual assignments that will be e-mailed to me before class on Thursday. These assignments will comprise one half of your group work grade. The second half of your group work grade will be two peer reviews from your other group mates that will be completed week 7 and week 14.

**Journal Article 10%**: Students are expected to write a 3 page response to a journal article of their choosing on any subject of African history, literature, or culture prior to 1500. The student’s response should summarize the author’s argument, explain what type of sources the author uses, and state whether the article is attempting to take existing research in a new direction or is researching a topic that had previously been ignored. **Students have to use library resources to complete this project.**

**Final Project (15%)**: The final project will consist of a fifteen minute group presentation based on a chosen area of African culture or history prior to 1500 or a concerning a tradition that started during the period of study for this course. Students are encouraged to use their creativity here and create a presentation using any medium of their choosing. All topics will have to be approved by me by the end of week 12.

**Final exam (25%)** This cumulative final will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions.

**Participation (15%)** Participation is based on how active you are in class when you attend. This includes how you conduct yourself in group work and during class lectures.

**Extra Credit**: Extra credit is available for students wishing to improve their grade. Students are encouraged to take the initiative to seek out cultural events that can further their understanding of African History and Culture. Students will receive a 100 quiz grade if they submit a 1-2 page response to the event that they attended. Students will need approval from me before submission of extra credit to ensure that the event is relevant to this course. Extra Credit will also be given in the form of an optional third essay. This essay will be due the final week of class and will be on one of four topics that will be posted on Blackboard in Week 8.
Attendance Policy: Class participation in an integral part to succeeding in this class. Because of this regular attendance is expected for all students. Attendance will make up 10% of your final grade. **Students will be deducted points from their final grade for each absence after their 4th unexcused one.**

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Properly citing sources is an essential part in being a historian. Plagiarism and/or failure to properly cite will not be tolerated. If you have any questions on whether you need to cite or not, please feel free to ask me.

The University has a policy on academic honesty as stated on page 26-27 of the 2010-2011 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:**
- **A** 94-100%
- **A-** 91-93%
- **B+** 88-90%
- **B** 84-87%
- **B-** 81-83%
- **C+** 78-80%
- **C** 74-77%
- **C-** 71-73%
- **D** 64-70%
- **F** 63% and below

**Course Outline**

**Part I: Introduction to African History**

Week 1: Course Introduction

August 26: Introduction
Assignments: No Readings this Week

August 28: The African Continent: An Overview

Class Activity- Group Quiz

Assignments:

Gilbert and Reynolds, Ch. 1 (4-13)


Week 2: Early Man in Africa

September 2: Early Man in Africa

Assignments:

Gilbert and Reynolds Ch.2 (14-24)


September 4: Early Man in Africa Part 2

Class Activity- Class Debate

Quiz #1

Assignments:

Gilbert and Reynolds Ch. 3 (25-39)


Study Questions #1 due

Week 3: Agriculture Revolution and the Spread of Language in Africa

September 9: The Agriculture Revolution

Assignments:

Gilbert and Reynolds Ch.4 (40-66)

Brizeula-Garcia and Getz, Ch.1 (1-18)

September 11: Bantu Expansion and Early African Societies
Class Activity- Jared Diamond- Why did farming win?

Quiz # 2

Assignments:
Brizuela-Garcia and Gets, Ch. 3 (39-56)

Study Questions # 2 Due

Week 4: Metals and Carthage

September 16: Metallurgy

Assignments:
Gilbert and Reynolds Ch. 5 (67-84)


September 18: Ancient Carthage and Roman North Africa

Class Activity- Writing and Culture in Egypt

Quiz # 3

Assignments:
Richard Miles, *Carthage Must be Destroyed*, Introduction (Available on Blackboard)

Study Questions # 3 due

Week 5 Christianity in Africa

September 23: Africa and Early Christians

Class Activity- North Africans Christian Thinkers

Assignments:
Gilbert and Reynolds Ch. 6 (85-97)

September 25: African Christianity Part II

Quiz # 4

Assignments:
Study Question #4 due

Week 6 Islam in Africa

September 30: Islam in North Africa

Assignments:

October 1: Islam in West Africa

Class Activity- Christianity’s Stand in Dongola

Quiz #5

Assignments:

Study Questions # 5

Week # 7 North Africa 300-1000

Oct 7: The Trans-Saharan Trade

Group Quiz for Quiz # 6

Oct 9: Fall Break (No Class)

Assignment:

Week # 8 Sundiata

Oct 14: Writing African History

This week will be used to discuss the key themes in *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* and help students prepare for their first essay.

Assignment:

Oct 16: Food Day

Essay #1 Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali due Monday October, 21st at 11:59 p.m. (1 point will be deducted for each day the paper is late)

Week 9 West Africa 300-1000
Oct 21: Kingdom of Nri

Assignment:

Class Activity- Gender roles of the Iron-Age Igbo

Oct 23: Kingdom of Ghana

Quiz #7

Assignment:

Study Questions #7

Week 10 East Africa 300-1000

Oct 28: East Africa’s Iron Age

Assignments:

Oct 30: The Swahili Coast

Class Activity- Environmental Change as a Catalyst of Historical Change in East Africa

Quiz # 8

Assignments:
Gilbert and Reynolds, Ch. 8 (120-138)

Study Questions # 8

Section 3 Africa 1000-1400

Week 11 North Africa

November 4: Moroccan Dynasties and Spain 1000-1400

Class Activity: The Reconquista
November 6: The Ayyubid Dynasty and the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt

Assignment:

No readings for this week

Easy # 2 The Adventures of Ibn Battuta Due November 12 at 11:59 p.m. (Students will be deducted 1 point for each day the paper is later)

Week 12 West Africa

November 11: The Malian Empire

Assignment:

Gilbert and Reynolds, ch. 7 (98-119)

Quiz # 9

November 13: Empires and States of the West African Sahel

Assignment:

John Iliffe, Africans: A History of a Continent, 63-99

Study Questions # 9

Week 13 Southern Africa 1000-1400 and the Coming of the Europeans

November 18: Great Zimbabwe


Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, Medieval Africa: 1250-1800, 194-211.

Journal Article Paper due November 18th

November 20: How Europe Viewed Africa in 1400

Assignment:


Quiz # 10

Study Question # 10

Week 14 How Africa Viewed the World in 1400
Nov 25: How Africa Viewed the World in 1400

Assignment:


November 28: Thanksgiving (No Class)

Week 15 Final Project

Dec. 2: Presentations day 1

Dec. 4: Presentations day 2

Week 16 Review

Dec 9: Course Overview

Dec: 11 Africa Jeopardy

Final Exam: