

AFH 2000: AFRICA IN WORLD HISTORY

Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Philip Janzen
Office: 494 Grinter Hall
Office Hours: Wed 2:00-4:00
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Course Schedule:
MWF period 4 (10:40 – 11:30)
0105 Keene-Flint Hall

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Course Overview

In North America, Africa is often represented as a faraway and isolated continent, on the periphery of world history. This course starts from the premise that Africa has long been linked with the rest of the world and has been central to many global developments. Through four thematic units, we will examine how the relationships between Africans and the rest of the world have changed over time: Africa and the World before the 19th Century; Atlantic Africa; Colonialism and Decolonization; and Contemporary Africa. Because the continent contains a remarkable array of languages, societies, and peoples, we cannot hope for exhaustive coverage. However, we will visit every major region at least once during the semester.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn how Africa's history has been shaped by both internal and external dynamics. In lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments, students will learn to analyze and challenge popular narratives of African history. We will examine broad historical processes that have shaped communities and the local and regional dynamics of specific peoples and places. The course will also emphasize the importance of learning African languages for understanding how Africans have interpreted and made sense of their worlds.

Required Course Texts

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2016)

D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Pearson, 2006)

Both books are available for purchase at the UF Bookstore as well as online booksellers. They are also on reserve at Library West. Links to all other readings can be found on Canvas.

Evaluation

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|---|-------|-------|
| • Map Quiz | (5%) | 9/8 |
| • Assignment #1: Article Précis | (20%) | 9/29 |
| • Assignment #2: Midterm Essay | (25%) | 10/20 |
| • Assignment #3: <i>Homegoing</i> Essay | (30%) | 12/6 |
| • Journal Responses | (20%) | --- |

I will provide more detailed guidelines for the assignments in the coming weeks.

Procedure

In general, classes on Mondays and Wednesdays will be lectures and classes on Fridays will be discussions based on the assigned weekly readings. I expect you to attend the lectures, complete the readings by the assigned dates, and participate actively in discussions.

Journal Responses: Starting in Week 2, students will write a journal response in class every Friday (except Weeks 7, 9, 12, 14, and 16). I will provide you with prompts/questions based on the weekly readings and lectures.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

8/23 **Lecture:** Review Syllabus; Images of Africa

8/25 **Discussion Reading:** Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa"

UNIT I: AFRICA AND THE WORLD BEFORE THE 19th CENTURY

Week 2 East Africa, Swahili, and the Indian Ocean World

8/28-8/30 **Lectures:** Language, Wealth, and Urban Complexity on the Swahili Coast

9/1 **Discussion Reading:** John M. Mugane, "Swahili, the Complex Language of a Cosmopolitan People," in *The Story of Swahili*, 15-40.

Week 3 Trans-Saharan Trade and Islam in West Africa9/4 **Holiday:** No Class9/6 **Lecture:** West African Empires9/8 **Discussion Reading:** D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, 1-40.

MAP QUIZ IN CLASS 9/8

Week 4 Sundiata and Oral Tradition in West Africa9/11-9/13 **Film:** "Keita: Heritage of the Griot" (1995)9/15 **Discussion Reading:** D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, 41-end.**Week 5 Political Complexity in the Great Lakes Region**9/18-9/20 **Lectures:** Healing, Agriculture, and Politics in the Ancient Great Lakes9/22 **Discussion Reading:** Steven Feierman, "Colonizers, Scholars and the Creation of Invisible Histories," in *Beyond the Linguistic Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (1999): 182-216.**Week 6 History and Historiography of Buganda**9/25-9/27 **Lectures:** Spirit Mediums and the Founding of the Buganda Kingdom9/29 **Discussion Readings:** Sir Apolo Kagawa, *The Kings of Buganda*, translated by M. S. M. Kiwanuka (Nairobi: 1971): 10-14; Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, 98-130.

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE ONLINE 9/29

UNIT II: ATLANTIC AFRICA**Week 7 The Transatlantic Slave Trade**10/2-10/4 **Lectures:** Slavery in Africa; The Middle Passage

Discussion Readings: Stephanie Smallwood, "Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities," in *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (2007): 33-64; Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*, 1-49 (Effia and Esi).

10/6 **Holiday:** No Class

Week 8 Africans in the Americas

10/9-10/11 **Lectures:** Social Death; Recreating Africa in the Americas

10/13 **Discussion Readings:** Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 1231-1249; Gyasi, *Homegoing*, 50-87 (Quey and Ness).

Week 9 Review and Midterm Essay

10/16-10/18 Review for Midterm Essay

10/20 Midterm Essay due online

UNIT III: COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

Week 10 End of the Slave Trade and Early Colonization

10/23-10/25 **Lectures:** "Legitimate" Trade and Creeping Imperialism

10/27 **Discussion Readings:** Gyasi, *Homegoing*, 88-176 (James, Kojo, Abena, H).

Week 11 Colonialism

10/30-11/1 **Lectures:** Colonial Rule; Language and Identity

11/3 **Discussion Reading:** Gyasi, *Homegoing*, 177-263 (Akua, Willie, Yaw, Sonny); Excerpts from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*.

Week 12 Decolonization

11/6-11/8 **Lectures:** Decolonization in Ghana and Congo

Discussion Reading: Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): 1-62.

11/10 **Holiday:** No Class

UNIT IV: CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Week 13 **Development**

11/13-11/15 **Lectures:** Postcolonial State Building; Origins of Development

11/17 **Discussion Readings:** James Ferguson, "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development," in *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2007), 176-93; Gyasi, *Homegoing*, 264-300 (Marjorie and Marcus).

Week 14 **Urban Africa**

11/20 **Lecture:** African Cities and Rural-Urban Migration

11/22-24 **Thanksgiving Holidays:** No Class

Week 15 **Popular Culture**

11/27-11/29 **Lectures:** Music, Film, Visual Art, Literature

12/1 **Discussion Readings:** Selections from Amanaz - Africa; Pumzi; Black Coffee and Hugh Masekela, Stimela; Swahili street fiction; and *oriki* from Nigeria

Week 16 **Course Wrap Up and Review**

12/4 Review for Final Essay

12/6 Final Essay due online

OTHER NOTES

Attendance

Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low grade. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found [here](#).

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit www.umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit www.counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	E	Below 60

Click [here](#) for more info on UF policies for assigning grade points.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is [available here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or at [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).