

AFH 3200: AFRICA SINCE 1800

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Philip Janzen
Office: 494 Grinter Hall
Office Hours: Mon 2:00-4:00
Email: pjanzen@ufl.edu

Course Schedule:
MWF period 4
0003 Matherly Hall

Course Overview

This course surveys the history of Africa since the early nineteenth-century. We will focus on political, social, economic, and cultural changes across three thematic units: Africa in the 19th century; Colonialism and Decolonization; and Postcolonial Africa. Most weeks will incorporate a mix of large-scale narratives and the stories of individual lives and places. Because the continent contains a remarkable array of languages, societies, and peoples, we cannot hope for exhaustive coverage. Instead, we will consider a variety of case studies and will visit almost every major region at least once during the semester.

Learning Objectives

This course has two main objectives. The first is to provide you with an understanding of the complexities of historical and contemporary Africa. You may not remember every date or name that comes up, but it is more important is that you leave the course with a grounding in *how* to think about African history as well as a better idea of *why* this is important. The second goal is to introduce you to the methodological challenges (and advantages) of studying African history. You will have the opportunity to work with primary sources and will learn to assess and think critically about evidence. You will also learn how to construct your own arguments about the past.

Required Course Texts

- Trevor Getz, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*
- Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya*
- Binyavanga Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write About this Place*

All three texts are available at the UF Bookstore. The Getz and Mutongi books are also on reserve at Library West. All other readings can be found on Canvas.

Evaluation

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|---|-------|
| • Assignment #1: Prestholdt Article Précis (15%) | 9/15 |
| • Assignment #2: Midterm Essay (20%) | 10/15 |
| • Assignment #3: <i>Blame Me on History</i> (15%) | 11/3 |
| • Assignment #4: <i>One Day I Will Write...</i> (30%) | 12/3 |
| • Participation (20%) | ---- |

Procedure

In general, the Monday and Wednesday classes will be lectures and the Friday classes will be discussions based on the assigned weekly readings. I expect you to attend the lectures, complete the weekly readings, and participate actively in discussions. Your participation grade is based on quality contributions to class discussions.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

8/22 **Lecture:** Review Syllabus; Images of Africa

Discussion Reading: Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa"

UNIT I: AFRICA IN THE 19th CENTURY

Week 2 East Africa in the 19th Century

8/25-8/27 **Lectures:** Swahili Coast; Caravans and Communities

8/29 **Discussion Reading:** Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004): 755-781.

Week 3 Trans-Saharan Trade and Islam in West Africa

9/1 **Holiday:** No Class

9/3 **Lectures:** Trans-Saharan Trade and the Spread of Islam in West Africa

9/5 **Discussion Reading:** Toby Green, "Let Them Drink Rum! Islam, Revolution and the Aristocracy," in *A Fistful of Shells*, 430-465.

Week 4 Slavery and “Legitimate” Trade

9/8-9/10 **Lectures:** Slavery in West Africa; Imperial Expansions

9/12 **Discussion Reading:** Trevor Getz, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*.

UNIT II: COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

Week 5 Colonial Occupations

9/15-9/17 **Lectures:** Colonization; Central Africa

9/19 **Discussion Reading:** Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya*, Part I.

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE 9/15

Week 6 Impacts of Colonialism I

9/22-9/24 **Lectures:** Colonialism and the Family; Work and Gender

9/26 **Discussion Reading:** Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, Part II.

Week 7 Impacts of Colonialism II

9/29-10/1 **Lectures:** Colonialism, Language, and Identity

10/3 **Discussion Reading:** Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, 1-33.

Week 8 Decolonization in Africa

10/6-10/8 **Lectures:** Decolonization in Ghana, Guinea, and Congo

10/10 **Discussion Reading:** Frantz Fanon, “Colonial War and Mental Disorders,” in *The Wretched of the Earth*, 181-233.

Week 9 Review and Midterm Essay

10/13-10/15 Review for Midterm Essay

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE 10/15

10/17 **Holiday:** No Class

UNIT III: POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA

Week 10 Apartheid in South Africa

10/20/10/22 **Lectures:** Establishing and Ending Apartheid

Museum Tour: Tour Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was a prisoner between 1964 and 1982 (via Google Arts & Culture link on Canvas).

10/24 **Reading:** Extracts from Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me On History* (1963): 92-101; 205-229; and 299-311).

Week 11 Postcolonial Violence

10/27-10/29 **Lectures:** Genocide in Rwanda

10/31 **Discussion Reading:** J.B. Kayigamba, "Without Justice, No Reconciliation: A Survivor's Experience of Genocide" (2009): 33-42; S. Warshauer et al, "Teaching History in Post-Genocide Rwanda," (2011): 297-315.

Week 12 Development and Debt

11/3-11/5 **Lectures:** Debt, Aid, and NGOs

11/7 **Discussion Reading:** James Ferguson, "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development," in *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2007), 176-93.

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE 11/3

Week 13 Urbanization and Popular Culture

11/10-11/12 **Lectures:** African Cities; Visual Art and Literature

11/14 **Discussion Reading:** Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write about this Place*, 1-127.

Week 14 Popular Culture II

11/17-11/19 **Lectures:** Music and Film

11/21 **Discussion Reading:** Wainaina, *One Day I Will Write about this Place*, 128-253.

Week 15 Review for Final Essay

12/1-12/3 **Lectures:** Course Wrap Up; Review for Final Essay

ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE 12/3

COURSE NOTES

Attendance

Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low participation 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 who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” Disability Resource Center [webpage](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

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.

Other Policies and Information

This course complies with all other UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).