

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History  
Fall 1986

History 376

History of Africa to 1800

Mr. Vansina

GENERAL: Readings:

Except for the first week, reading assignments should be done the week before the classes to which they pertain. Graduate students have additional assigned readings.

Credits:

4 credits with a midterm paper, three credits with a midterm exam (take-home).

Examinations:

6 weeks optional, except for sophomores who must take it - written; identifications and one essay question, 20%. 12 weeks: written and essay questions, or paper or log, 40%. "Log" refers to the practice of keeping a notebook about the course and the readings, week by week, including personal reflections about the questions discussed. The log is submitted week 12. Final: essay questions. A final paper is optional, replacing the exam, but students should take at least one exam, whether 12 week or final.

OUTLINE: The main themes of the course are outlined in the first lecture. Slides are used to familiarize the audience with visual realities that are foreign to them. Some may be used on the 6 week exam. Moreover, students are advised to look at picture books and to consult atlases. J.F.A. Ajayi, M. Crowder, Historical Atlas of Africa, London, 1985, is the standard historical atlas.

BACKGROUND REFERENCE:

The following multivolume series are standard:

The Cambridge History of Africa, vols. 2-5

The UNESCO General History of Africa, vols. 1, 2, 4 (so far)

The Cambridge History of Islam

J.A. Ajayi, M. Crowder, History of West Africa, London, 1970's, vol. 1

D. Birmingham, P. Martin, History of Central Africa, London, 1983, vol. 1

R. Elphick, H. Giliomee, The Shaping of South African Society, London, 1979

B.A. Ogot, J.A. Kieran, Zamani: A Survey of East African History, London, 1970's

Note: The Oxford histories of East Africa and South Africa are out of date.

TEXTS: Required: Paperbacks in Bookshops and on reserve

Curtin, P., Feierman, S., Thompson, L., Vansina, J., African History, Boston, 1977. ~~Out of print.~~ Only used copies available. [Hereafter: C.]

Gibb, H.A.R., Mohammedanism, London, 1964

Niane, D.T., Sundiata, London, 1966

McLeod, M.D., The Asante, London, 1981

Nurse, D., Spear, T., The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 1500-1800, Philadelphia (Univ. of Penn. Press), 1985, \$11.95

Recommended: Graduate Reading Room Reserve

The UNESCO General History of Africa, vol. 4, 1984

Josephy, A.M., The Horizon History of Africa, New York, 1971

SYLLABUS:

I. Beginnings

Week 1 - Introduction

Sep. 3 Geography and History

Sep. 5 History and Africa

Reading: "Africa" entry in Macropaedia of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. See reference section of all libraries.

Week 2 - The Shaping of Africa's Main Cultural Traditions

Sep. 8 Birth of an Oikoumene

Sep. 10 Cities and Pioneering Migrations

Reading: C., 1-66; R. and S. McIntosh, "Finding West Africa's Oldest City", National Geographic Magazine, Sep. 1982, vol. 162, no. 3:396-415; Enc. Brit., Macropaedia, vol. 13, 145-155, entry: "North Africa, History of".

II. Cultural Traditions and Societies: c. 600-c. 1500

Week 3 - Islam

Sep. 15 Islam, a New Universal Religion

Sep. 17 The Spread of Islam in Africa to c. 1200

Reading: H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism

Week 4 - Varieties of Feudal States

Sep. 22 Feudal Egypt

Sep. 24 Medieval Ethiopia

Reading: UNESCO History, vol. 4, chapters 15, 17

Week 5 - Caliphs and Caravans

Sep. 29 Morocco

Oct. 1 The Trans-Saharan Trade

Reading: C., 74-116; Horizon History of Africa, 177-216

Week 6 - West African Societies

Oct. 6 Mali

Oct. 8 Decentralized Systems

Oct. 10 Six-weeks exam

Reading: D.T. Niane, Sundiata

Week 7 - Differentiation in Eastern and Southern Africa

Oct. 13 On the Shores of the Indian Ocean

Oct. 15 Southern Africa

Reading: D. Nurse, T. Spear, The Swahili, relevant portions

Week 8 - Food and Worship

Oct. 20 African Ways of Making a Living  
Oct. 22 Regional African Religions  
Reading: To be assigned later.

III. Africa in the Era of the European World-Economy

Week 9 - The Ottomans

Oct. 27 Regencies in Barbary  
Oct. 29 Upheavals in the Horn  
Reading: C., 180-212.

Week 10 - The Inhuman Trade

Nov. 3 The Slave Trade  
Nov. 7 Its Organisation and Its Impact  
Reading: C., 213-248; N. Klein, "The Portuguese Slave Trade From  
Angola in the Eighteenth Century", Journal of Economic History,  
vol. 32, 1972, 894-918.

Week 11 - West Africa

Nov. 10 Revolts in the Sahel and Their Idiom  
Nov. 12 New Coastal Societies  
Reading: M.D. McLeod, The Asante

Week 12 - Central Africa to 1700

Nov. 17 Signs of the Leopard  
Nov. 19 Kongo and Angola  
Reading: C., 249-276.

Week 13 - Central Africa, 1700-1850

Nov. 24 The Great River Trade  
Nov. 26 Lunda and the Slave Trade  
Distribution of Take-Home Exam  
Nov. 27 Thanksgiving  
Reading: C., 249-276.

Week 14 - Herdsmen and Monarchs

Dec. 1 The Great Lakes Kingdoms  
Return examinations  
Dec. 3 Pastoral Ways of Life  
Dec. 5 The Lands of the Indian Ocean  
Reading: C., 117-178

Week 15 - Southern Africa

Dec. 8 South of the Zambezi  
Dec. 10 Europeans at the Cape  
Reading: C., 277-303

EEQUIRED READING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:

In addition to the readings mentioned, graduate students will read the relevant portions of the CAMBRIDGE and UNESCO histories especially for northern Africa, the Horn and West Africa as well as the following:

- Week 1 - J. Vansina, "Western Bantu Expansion", JAH, 1984, 129-145
- Week 2 - Cambridge History of Islam, vol. 1a, chapters 2 and 3
- Week 6 - N. Levtzion, Ancient Ghana and Mali, London, 1973, part 2
- Week 7 - N. Huffman, "Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the African Iron Age", Annual Review of Anthropology, vol. 11, 1982, 133-150
- Week 9 - J.B. Wolf, The Barbary Coast, New York, 1979
- Week 10 - P. Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery, Cambridge, 1983
- Weeks 12 and 13 - D. Birmingham and P. Martin, History of Central Africa, London, 1983, vol. 1, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5
- Week 15 - Birmingham, chapters 6 and 7; and R. Elphick, Giliomee (eds.), The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820, London, 1979.

Graduate students are encouraged to keep a log comparing divergent points of view in their readings with their own opinions. This can replace their final examination. For details consult the instructor.