

History 377: History of Africa, 1500-1870

Fall 2010
MWF 11.00-11.55
1131 Humanities
TA: Sean Bloch

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 1.15-2.30
5115 Humanities



Mansa Musa, King of Mali

Welcome to History 377. The course provides a survey of the cultural and social history of Africa south of the Sahara from approximately 1500-1870. Because there is so much to learn about Africa and Africans during this period, we cannot strive for exhaustive coverage. However, we will visit almost every major historical region of sub-Saharan Africa at least once during the semester and will focus on several important themes in the history of the continent. The first part of the course focuses on the historical development of African societies prior to the rise of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades. We will then explore the origins of the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on Africa. Finally, we will complete the course by examining the momentous transformations in sub-Saharan Africa during "the long 19th century," including the dramatic growth of the Indian Ocean slave trade, the expansion of European settlements in South Africa, and the expansion of European influence in other parts of the continent during the period leading up to the formal establishment of colonial rule.

Required Readings:

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and are also on reserve at Helen C. White:

Lisa A. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade*

D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*

Maryse Conde, *Segu*

There are also a series of readings available via Learn@UW. The designation (cp) next to a reading indicates readings available online.

Recommended Readings:

I have not assigned a textbook for this course. However, for those interested in reading a general overview of African history, please see Robert O. Collins and James M. Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*. I have placed a copy of this textbook on reserve at College Library.

ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION:

- 1) Essay analyzing *Sundiata* and "Keita: The Heritage of a Griot": 10%
- 2) Take-home midterm I: 20%
- 3) Take-home midterm II: 20%
- 4) Take-home final: 25%
- 5) Participation in discussion sections and map quiz: 25%

Academic Honesty

In keeping with the policy of this university, plagiarism (using other people's thoughts or words without acknowledging the source) is unacceptable. *All sources, including internet sources, MUST be cited in your written work.* A first offense will result in a report submitted to the Dean of Students and a failing grade on the paper in question.

Knowing how or when to cite can be confusing; if you are having trouble, rather than living in fear of inadvertent plagiarism please come discuss it with me or the TA during

office hours, or seek advice from the writing center. You may also find the following link helpful: www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

For a guide on how to properly cite sources, please consult the following website: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (Sep. 2-3)

9/3 Introduction to Course

Week 2 (Sep. 6-10)

9/6 No class: Labor Day

9/8 Knowing Africa: Preconceptions and Misconceptions

9/10 Film: "Keita: The Heritage of a Griot"

Reading: Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa" (cp)

Week 3 (Sep. 13-17)

9/13 Mapping Africa: Geography, Language, and Environment

9/15 Ideals of Social Organization

PART ONE: ISLAM, EMPIRE, AND ORAL TRADITION IN WEST AFRICA

9/17 Trans-Saharan Trade and the Spread of Islam in West Africa

Reading: D. Robinson, "The Islamization of Africa" and "The Africanization of Islam" (cp)

Week 4 (Sep. 20-24)

9/20 Empires and Oral Traditions: Ancient Mali

9/22 The Road to Timbuktu: Songhay

Hand out paper topics

9/24 No class: work on papers

Reading: D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*

PART 2: POLITICAL COMPLEXITY IN EARLY SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN HISTORY

Week 5 (Sep. 27-Oct. 1)

9/27 The Arts of Wealth in People in the Inner Congo Basin

Papers due in class

9/29 Ideology and Empire: The Luba Kingdom

10/1 Early Great Lakes History and the Chwezi Kubandwa Revolution

Reading: J. Guyer and S. E. Belinga, "Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge: Accumulation and Composition in Equatorial Africa" (cp)

Week 6 (Oct. 4-8)

10/4 Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Precolonial Rwanda

10/6 Land and Power in Buganda

10/8 Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa

Reading: N. Kodesh, "Networks of Knowledge: Clanship and Collective Well-Being in Buganda" (cp)

Week 7 (Oct. 11-15)

10/11 The Rise of Swahili Culture and the Classical Age of Swahili City-States

10/13 Southeastern Africa and the Zimbabwe Plateau

Hand out exams

10/15 No Class: work on exams

Reading: M. Horton and J. Middleton, "The Swahili Coast" (cp)
Ibn Battuta, "A visit to Zeila, Mogadishu, Mombassa and Kilwa in 1331"

PART THREE: THE TRANATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Week 8 (Oct. 18-22)

10/18 The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Exams due in class

10/20 What is Slavery? Inequality and Dependence in Africa

10/22 Transformations in Slavery During the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Reading: L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, "Introduction" and chapters 1-2

Week 9 (Oct. 25-29)

10/25 Oyo, Benin, and Dahomey

10/27 The Niger Delta: Ijo and Igbo

10/29 Asante

Reading: M. Conde, *Segu*, 1-161

Week 10 (Nov. 1-5)

11/1 Kongo and Angola

11/3 The Slave Trade in West-Central Africa

11/5 The African Diaspora

Reading: M. Conde, *Segu*, 162-322

Week 11 (Nov. 8-12)

11/8 The Atlantic Slave Trade and Africa History

11/10 Abolition, the Slow Death of Slavery, and Legitimate Trade in the 19 Century

11/12 The Jihads of West Africa

Hand out exam

Reading: M. Conde, *Segu*, 325-493

L. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities*, chapter 4 (recommended)

Week 12 (Nov. 15-19)

11/15 No class: work on exams

PART FOUR: THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

11/17 The Indian Ocean Slave Trade

Exams due in class

11/19 The Emergence of Plantation Economies in East Africa

Reading: J. Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes" (cp)

Week 13 (Nov. 22-26)

11/22 Globalization and East Africa

11/24 Film: "The Slave Kingdoms"

11/26 Thanksgiving Break

Reading: J. Prestholdt, "Picturesque Contradictions" (cp)

L. Kaba, "The Atlantic Slave Trade Was Not a Black on-Black Holocaust" (cp)

Week 14 (Nov. 29-Dec. 3)

11/29 South Africa: The Arrival of the Dutch

12/1 The Zulu and the Mfecane

12/3 European Expansion in South Africa

Reading: Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character of Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as 'Mfecane' Motor"

Week 15 (Dec. 6-10)

12/6 Diamonds and Gold: The Making of Modern South Africa

12/8 Prelude to Conquest

12/10 The Scramble for Africa

Reading: A. Adu Boahen, "The Imposition of the Colonial System: Initiatives and Responses (cp)

Week 16 (Dec. 13-15)

12/13 Review

12/15 Hand out Final Exam