

History 444: History of East Africa

Neil Kodesh

Spring 2010

Office hours: Thursday 11-1

kodesh@wisc.edu

2111 Humanities

5115 Humanities



Welcome to History 444. This course considers a number of major themes in the history of East Africa. Because this region contains a remarkable array of languages, cultures, and peoples, we cannot hope for exhaustive coverage. Instead, we will visit several historical zones during the course and will focus particular attention on four places: the kingdom and nation-state of Rwanda; the kingdom of Buganda in present-day Uganda; the Swahili coast in present-day Tanzania and Kenya; and the highlands of central Kenya. In addition to exploring such themes as the nature of political authority in the precolonial period, the impact of colonial rule, and the challenges that accompanied the transition to independence in each of these places, we will also examine some of the methods that historians use to reconstruct East African history. The course will follow a mixed lecture/discussion format in order to allow you to think through issues for yourself and to arrive at your own understanding of the issues involved. In this way, I hope that you will take away from the course an understanding not just of *what* to think about the history of East Africa but also *how* to think historically about this region of the world.

Required Readings:

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

Holly E. Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda*

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*

Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya*

Scott Strauss, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Photograph assignment: a selection of photographs of East Africa will be posted on Learn@UW. Each student will select one or photographs that is particularly interesting to you and will research one element or topic that you think would enrich your understanding of that photo(s). You will then write 5 pages explaining why you chose this photo(s), summarizing your research, and discussing the photo in the context of Jeremy Prestholdt's *Domesticating the World* and class lectures. Papers will be due in class on 2/18
- 2) Each student will complete ONE of the following assignments. You may choose which paper you would like to write:
 - a) 5-page paper covering weeks 6-9, with a focus on Lynn Thomas' *Politics of the Womb*. Paper topics will be handed out in class on 3/18 and the paper will be due in class on 3/25.
 - b) 5-page paper covering weeks 10-14, with a focus on Holly Hanson's *Landed Obligation*. Paper topics will be handed out in class on 4/15 and the paper will be due on 4/22.
- 3) Take-home final exam. The exam will be handed out in class on 5/6 and will be due on 5/14 by 2 p.m.

EVALUATION

Photograph Assignment (including in-class presentation): 25%

Paper: 25%

Final exam: 35%

Attendance and participation in classroom discussions: 15%

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Week 1 (Jan. 19-22)

1/19 Knowing Africa: Preconceptions and Misconceptions

1/21 Ideals of Social Organization and Finding Our Way into the Distant Past

Reading: B. Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa" (available on learn@uw)

Week 2 (Jan. 25-29)

1/26 The Rise of Swahili Culture and the Classical Age of Swahili City-States

1/28 Commercial Expansion in the 19th Century

Reading: J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, Introduction and chs. 1-2

Week 3 (Feb. 1-5)

2/2 Transformations in Slavery

2/4 Citizenship and Identity in Swahili Communities

Reading: J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, chs. 3-5

Week 4 (Feb. 8-12)

2/9 Invasion of the Mrima Coast and the Maji Maji Rebellion

2/11 Race, Ethnicity, and the Zanzibar Revolution

Reading: J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, chs. 5-6 and Conclusion

Week 5 (Feb. 15-19)

2/16 No class: work on photograph assignment

2/18 Ujamaa and its Aftermath in Tanzania

Reading: No reading

Papers due in class on 2/18

Week 6 (Feb. 22-26)

2/23 Political Culture in Central Kenya

2/25 Farmers, Herders, and the Pastoral Revolution

Reading: L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, Introduction and ch. 1

Week 7 (March 1-5)

3/2 The Establishment of Settler Colonialism in Kenya

3/4 The Colonial Economy in the Kenyan Highlands

Reading: L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, chs. 2-3

Week 8 (March 8-12)

3/9 Women, Migrant Labor, and Christianity in the Making of Colonial Society in Central Kenya

3/11 The Origins of Mau Mau

Reading: L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, ch. 4

Week 9 (March 15-19)

3/16 The Mau Mau War and its Aftermath

3/18 No class: work on papers

Reading: L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, ch. 5 and Conclusion

Hand out paper topics in class on 3/18

Week 10 (March 22-26)

3/23 Politics and Healing in the Northern Great Lakes Region

3/25 Land and Power in Buganda

Reading: H. Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, Introduction and chs. 1-2

Papers due in class on 3/25

Week 11 (March 29-April 4) SPRING BREAK

Week 12 (April 5-9)

4/6 The Christian Revolution and the Establishment of Indirect Rule in Buganda

4/8 Disease and Authority in Colonial Uganda

Reading: H. Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, chs. 3-4

Week 13 (April 12-16)

4/13 Social Changes in Early Colonial Buganda

4/15 The Kabaka Crisis and the Move Towards Independence

Reading: H. Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, chs. 5-6 and Conclusion

Hand out paper topics in class on 4/15

Week 14 (April 19-23)

4/20 No class: work on papers

4/22 Independence and its Aftermath in Uganda

Reading: No reading

Papers due in class on 4/22

Week 15 (April 26-30)

4/27 Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Precolonial Rwanda

4/29 The Roots of Ethnic Violence in Rwanda

Reading: S. Strauss, *The Order of Genocide*, Introduction and chs. 1-4

Week 16 (May 3-7)

5/4 Genocide, Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda

5/6 Conclusion: East Africa in the 21st Century

Reading: S. Strauss, *The Order of Genocide*, chs. 5-8

Hand out final exam in class on 5/6. The exam will be due on 5/14 by 2 pm.