AFS 2002: The African Experience  
Section 0941, Spring 2014  
T, P2-3; R, P 2 (NRN 0331)  

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Office hours: T and F, 10:30-12noon  

Course Description  
This course presents an opportunity to discover the rich and fascinating tapestry of diverse peoples, societies and cultures in an important and little known continent which shares a long history of relations with the Americas.  

The course approach will be highly interdisciplinary. We will discuss issues related to the history, culture, arts, politics, and languages of African peoples, as well as to the socio-economic development of their societies. An important theme of the course will be the diversity of Africa: with 55 recognized states, perhaps 2000 languages (about 1/3 of all the languages spoken by humans today), and a wide variety of cultures and religions, it is hard to generalize about Africa. Yet at the same time, there are important commonalities in “the African experience” (the title of this course). These are rooted in some shared cultural norms, a largely shared history of European colonization, and similar positions in the global political and economic order since independence in the 1960s. This course will examine both the commonalities of the African experience, and its variations.  

Course Objectives  
By the end of this course you should have:  
• Acquired a broad knowledge of the African realities,  
• Become aware of the diversity of the African experiences,  
• Acquired some basic knowledge of African geography, history, politics, religions, societies and cultures,  
• Grasped some of the complexity of African contemporary challenges (socio-economic development, uneven patterns of trade and globalization, HIV/AIDS).  

Course Requirements  
Your final evaluation is based on the following components (with correspondent points):  
• Presence and participation (15 points)  
• Geography and History Test (20 points)  
• Reaction Paper (20 points)  
• Blog postings on African Affairs (15 points)  
• Final Test (30 points)  

Total points will be calculated, and the final grade will be assigned according to the table:  

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
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<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tot pts</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>83-86</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx.

- **PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class – it is therefore important you arrive in class on time. I will take points off for each class absence, unless appropriate written justification is provided, or the absence is due to one of the “acceptable reasons” as per UF policies (see link below). Participation in class discussions is crucial, and you are expected to actively contribute to debates if you want to obtain full score in this component. Un-respectful class demeanor (e.g. talking and texting during the class, using lap-tops for anything else than taking class notes, and studying for other classes) is NOT TOLERATED. After a first warning, you may be asked to leave the class and your grade will be lowered.

- **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY QUIZ:** You will be tested on your knowledge of the names and locations of the 55 recognized African states; and on basic geography and historical facts covered during weeks 1-4.

- **REACTION PAPER:** You are required to write one paper (about 3 pages long, typed, double-spaced) comparing elements of the *The Dark Child* and *A School for my Village* narratives.

- **POSTINGS ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS:** you should regularly follow African news and affairs through media, such as: The Economist (http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east-africa); the BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/); The New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/africa/index.html); Al Jazeera (http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/) and The Guardian (http://www.theguardian.com/world/africa/roundup). Each student is required to post at least 3 times during the semester using the discussion page on Sakai: each posting will contain 2-3 paragraphs presenting an interesting piece of African news, commenting on it, and exploring the connection, if any, to the topics of the course. Reactions to others’ postings do not count towards the 3 required postings, but are very welcome and will enhance your grade.

- **FINAL TEST** will be based on all course readings, videos and lectures covered during weeks 5-14. It will be a combination of multiple choices, fill-in-the blank and short essay questions. It will be held on Tuesday April 22 in class.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.

**Make-up policy:** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx. Excuses for missing a class test or deadline for assignments will only be accepted for proven and acceptable reasons. You should give me prior notice whenever possible.

**Extra credits** can be earned in one of the following ways (please note: extra credit assignments should be submitted to the instructor in class, printed copy only):
- attend one session of the 2014 Carter Conference organized by the Center for African Studies (Feb 22-24) and submit one page commentary/reaction (up to 3 points).

- read the optional book “Unbowed” by Wangari Maathai, submit a short written commentary (1-2 pages) and participate in class discussion on April 1st (up to 6 points).

- attend one seminar or other event on African related topics and submit one page commentary (up to 2 points). Please note: event need to be approved by instructor.

**Academic Honesty:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

**Campus Helping Resources**

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. The Counseling and Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Contact information: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575.

Other useful contacts are also the University Police Department: 392-1111.

**Students with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) 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 in the semester.

Do you like courses with African content and you want to know more? Then learn about the many opportunities UF offers to increase your knowledge of Africa:

- The Center for African Studies offers many courses with an African content. You can pick up a free booklet with details from 427 Grinter, and ask for more information.

- Many stimulating opportunities exist, such as Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs (including the prestigious Lumbardi Program). For more info contact the CAS deputy director Todd Leedy (427 Grinter; email tleedy@africa.ufl.edu).

- Do you want to meet your foreign language requirement in a different and exciting way? Learn one of several African languages taught by AALL department. For more information contact Dr C. Bwenge at cbwenge@africa.ufl.edu.

- Are you taking, or planning to take, other courses in African Studies? If so, you may qualify for a Minor in African Studies. Make sure you declare it: in the past, some students who qualified, failed to declare it! Dr Leedy will be happy to help you make the process even easier: he will send the form for you!
Reading and other course material:

There is one core textbook for this course:


Plus two other texts, both required:


The following book is optional but highly suggested to those who want to earn extra credits for this class (see instructions for extra credit above):


One copy of each book should be available from the Reserve Desk in Library West for 2-hours in-library use.

All other class reading and material (including lecture powerpoints) will be made available on the course website on the UF Sakai system. The course site on Sakai can be accessed through [http://lss.at.ufl.edu](http://lss.at.ufl.edu), by entering your Gatorlink username and password. Through this site you can also: read assignment instructions, post your assignments, and check grades. The videos shown in class are part of the class material on which you may be tested. If you miss a class in which a video is shown, it is your responsibility to borrow and watch the video from the West Library, Reserve class desk.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Please note: the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to the following schedule during the semester

**You are required to do the relevant reading before each class.**

**Week 1: Introduction**

Jan 7: Course overview
Jan 9: Introduction to Africa. What do you know about Africa?
  - Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 1

**Week 2: Resources and Geography**

Jan 14: African Geography: Lecture by Prof. Abe Goldman
  - Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 2
Jan 16: The Map of African states
  - Study the Africa map resources posted on Sakai

**Week 3: History before independence**

Jan 21: Slavery and the pre-colonial period
  - Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 3 (pp. 23-49)
Jan 23: The colonial period
  - Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 3 (pp. 49-end); Ch. 4 (up to p. 68)
Week 4: History and Politics after independence
Jan 28: The politics during independence and the early post-colonial period
  • Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 4 (all)
Jan 30: Geography and History In-class Test

Week 5: Arts Part I
Feb 4: Visual arts: Lecture by Dr. Victoria Rovine (Art History and CAS)
Feb 6: How to read a classic of African Literature:
  • Reading: *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye (Chs 1-6)
  • Reading: *UC Africa* Ch. 12

Week 6: Arts Part II
Feb 11: African cinema: Lecture by Dr. Alioune Sow (LLC & CAS)
Feb 13: How to read a classic of African Literature:
  • Reading: *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye (Chs 7-12)

Week 7: Economic development
Feb 18: Economic Development: main issues and challenges
  • Reading: *UC Africa* Ch. 5
Feb 20: International relations and development aid
  • Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 6

Feb 21-22: Kongo Atlantic Dialogues: 2014 Carter Conference (extra credit)

Week 8: Library
Feb 25: Visit to the Smathers Library with Dr Dan Reboussin
Feb 27: Reading: Kaguri “A school for my village” (Chs. 1-17)

March 1-8: Spring Break

Week 9: Visit to the Harn Museum
March 11: Visit to the Harn Museum of Art: tour led by Dr Susan Cooksey
March 13: Reading: Kaguri “A school for my village” (Chs. 18-32)
Reaction Paper due

Week 10: Health and the Environment
March 18: Population and HIV-AIDS
  • Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 7
  • Browse www.avert.org/aids-hiv-africa.htm
March 20: Health and Environment: Lecture by Dr Rick Rheingans (CAS and Public Health)
  • Reading: *UC Africa* Ch. 8

Week 11: Contemporary families
March 25: Kinship and diaspora: Lecture by Dr. Abdoulaye Kane (CAS and Anthropology)
  • Reading: *UC Africa*, Ch. 9
March 27: Urban Africa (and study abroad): Lecture by Dr. Todd Leedy (CAS)
  • Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 7

**Week 12: Gender issues**
April 1: The life and work of Wangari Maathai
  • Presentation and discussion of “Unbowed” (for extra credit)
April 3: Gender issues
  • Reading: UC Africa Ch. 10

**Week 13: Religion and languages**
April 8: Religion in Africa: Lecture by Dr. Terje Ostebo (Religion and CAS)
  • Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 11
April 10: The languages of Africa. Lecture by Dr. Charles Bwenge (CAS and LLC) TBC

**Week 14: Challenges and Opportunities**
April 15: Poverty reduction and the MDGs
  • Reading: UC Africa Ch. 14
April 17: Debt and aid
  • Reading: UC Africa Ch. 14

**Week 15: Conclusions**
April 22: Final in-class Test