

AFH 2000: AFRICA IN WORLD HISTORY

Fall 2021

Dr. Philip Janzen

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Office: 494 Grinter Hall

Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:30

In-person or via Zoom

Meeting ID: 245 859 3547

Course Schedule:

MWF period 5 (11:45 - 12:35)

0113 Little Hall

(and online via Zoom)

Course Overview

In North America, Africa is often represented as a faraway and isolated continent, on the periphery of world history. This course starts from the premise that Africa has long been linked with the rest of the world and has been central to many global developments. Through four thematic units, we will examine how the relationships between Africans and the rest of the world have changed over time: Africa and the World before the 19th Century; Atlantic Africa; Colonialism and Decolonization; and Contemporary Africa. Because the continent contains a remarkable array of languages, societies, and peoples, we cannot hope for exhaustive coverage. However, we will visit almost every major region at least once during the semester.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn how Africa's history has been shaped by both internal and external dynamics. In lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments, students will learn to analyze and challenge popular narratives of African history. We will examine broad historical processes that have shaped communities and the local and regional dynamics of specific peoples and places. The course will also emphasize the importance of learning African languages for understanding how Africans have interpreted and made sense of their worlds.

Required Course Texts

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2016)

D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Pearson, 2006)

Both books are available for purchase at the UF Bookstore. They are also on reserve at Library West. Links to all other readings can be found on the Canvas course website.

Evaluation

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|---|-------|-------|
| • Assignment #1: Article Précis | (15%) | 10/4 |
| • Assignment #2: Midterm Essay | (20%) | 10/22 |
| • Assignment #3: <i>Homegoing</i> Essay | (20%) | 11/15 |
| • Assignment #4: Final Essay | (25%) | 12/8 |
| • Participation | (20%) | --- |

I will provide more detailed guidelines for the assignments in the coming weeks.

Procedure

This is a HyFlex course, meaning that you may attend class in-person or online via Zoom. I will not be recording class sessions.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, I will present lectures. On Fridays, we will discuss the assigned weekly readings. I expect you to attend the lectures, complete the readings by the assigned dates, and participate actively in discussions. Your participation grade is based on quality contributions to class discussions.

If you have questions about the course, please first consult this syllabus. You may also come to my office hours or contact me by email. I will do my best to respond within one business day.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

8/23-8/25 **Lectures:** Review Syllabus; Images of Africa

8/27 **Discussion Reading:** Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa" and Chris Lowe, "The Trouble with Tribe."

UNIT I: AFRICA AND THE WORLD BEFORE THE 19th CENTURY

Week 2 East Africa, Swahili, and the Indian Ocean World

8/30-9/1 **Lectures:** Language, Wealth, and Urban Complexity on the Swahili Coast

9/3 **Discussion Reading:** John M. Mugane, "Swahili, the Complex Language of a Cosmopolitan People," in *The Story of Swahili*, 15-40; Guest visit from Dr. Rose Lugano on studying Swahili at UF.

Week 3 Trans-Saharan Trade and Islam in West Africa

9/6 **Holiday:** No Class

9/8 **Film:** “Caravans of Gold”

9/10 **Guest Lecture:** Language and Archaeology of the Ghana Empire
(Mustapha Mohammed)

Reading: K. B. Berzock, ed., *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa* (2019): Chapters 3, 7, and 8; D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, 1-40.

Week 4 Sundiata and Oral Tradition in West Africa

9/13-9/15 **Film:** “Keita: Heritage of the Griot” (1995)

9/17 **Discussion Reading:** D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, 41-end.

Week 5 Political Complexity in the Great Lakes Region

9/20-9/22 **Lectures:** Healing, Agriculture, and Politics in the Ancient Great Lakes

9/24 **Discussion Reading:** Steven Feierman, “Colonizers, Scholars and the Creation of Invisible Histories,” in *Beyond the Linguistic Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Lynn Hunt and Victoria Bonnell, (1999): 182-216.

Week 6 History and Historiography of the Buganda Kingdom

9/27-9/29 **Lectures:** Spirit Mediums and the Founding of the Buganda Kingdom

10/1 **Discussion Readings:** Sir Apolo Kagawa, *The Kings of Buganda*, translated by M. S. M. Kiwanuka (Nairobi: 1971): 10-14; Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, 98-130.

UNIT II: ATLANTIC AFRICA

Week 7 **The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**

10/4-10/6 **Lectures:** Slavery in Africa; Enslavement and the Middle Passage;

Discussion Reading: Stephanie Smallwood, "Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities," in *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (2007): 33-64.

10/8 **Holiday:** No Class

Week 8 **Africans in the Americas**

10/11-10/13 **Lectures:** Social Death; Recreating Africa in the Americas (Language and Religion)

10/15 **Discussion Reading:** Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 1231-1249.

Week 9 **Review and Midterm Essay**

10/18-10/20 Review for Midterm Essay

10/22 Midterm Essay due online

UNIT III: COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

Week 10 **End of the Slave Trade and Early Colonization**

10/25 **Lecture:** "Legitimate" Trade and Creeping Imperialism

10/27 **Guest Lecture:** Akan Language and Social Structures in the 18th and 19th Centuries (Mustapha Mohammed)

10/29 **Discussion Reading:** Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (2016), Part I, 1-153.

Week 11 **Colonialism**

11/1-11/3 **Lectures:** Colonial Rule; Language, Identity, and Education

11/5 **Discussion Reading:** Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (2016), Part II, 154-end.

Week 12 Decolonization

11/8-11/10 **Lectures:** Decolonization in Guinea and Angola

11/12 **Discussion Reading:** Frantz Fanon, “Colonial War and Mental Disorders,” in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): 181-233; Extracts from *Decolonizing the Mind* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o.

UNIT IV: CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Week 13 Development and Global Health

11/15-11/17 **Lectures:** Postcolonial State building; NGOs and Global Health

11/19 **Discussion Reading:** James Ferguson, “Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development,” in *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2007), 176-93.

Week 14 Urban Africa

11/22 **Lecture:** African Cities and Rural-Urban Migration

11/24-26 **Thanksgiving Holidays:** No Class

Week 15 Popular Culture in Africa

11/29-12/1 **Lectures:** Music, Film, Visual Art, Literature

12/3 **Discussion Readings:** Selections from Amanaz - Africa; Pumzi; Paintings of Tshibumba Kanda-Matulu; Swahili street fiction and *oriki* from Nigeria

Week 16 Course Wrap Up and Review

12/6 Review for Final Essay

12/8 Final Essay due online

OTHER NOTES

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

For information regarding current UF policies for assigning grade points, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

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.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Learning in a Pandemic

As with the past three semesters, this fall will bring more stress and anxiety than usual, for both faculty and students. In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- Attendance: If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. If you are able, attend class via Zoom. I will not penalize you if you have to miss class, but you must let me know. I will give you a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low participation grade.

- Masking: You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated.
- Vaccinations: If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. [Visit this link](#) for details on where to get your shot. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- Sanitizing supplies: They are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- If you are sick: please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire, and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.
- Withheld: If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is [available here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or at [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).