

The African Experience

AFS2002 | ANT3930

Fall 2021

Tuesday | Period 5 & 6 (11:45 - 1:40 PM)

Thursday | Period 6 (12:50 - 1:40 PM)

Instructor: Cady Gonzalez

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Office hours: Tuesday 2-4pm | Thursday 2-3pm



Course Description

This course presents an opportunity to discover the richness and diversity of a continent once called the Dark Continent. We will explore the places, politics, economies and cultures. The course approach will be highly interdisciplinary. We will discuss issues about the past, present and make projections into the future in such a way as to allow us understand better the socio-economic situation of the continent. An important theme of the course will be the diversity of Africa: with 55 recognized independent Nation-states, with close to about 2000 distinct languages (about 1/3 of all the languages spoken by humans today), and a wide variety of belief systems and religions, there will be a lot to learn. It will thus become obvious that generalization about Africa is tenuous. 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. What can we learn from the various challenges Africa as a continent faces.

Student Learning 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).
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- Evaluate, organize and analyze a range of source material from diverse perspectives
 - Develop original ideas about 'solving' (or articulating) one of the challenges Africa is facing presently using evidence gathered from articles or guest presenters.
 - Debate and discuss contemporary issues with your peers
 - Write effectively

COURSE MATERIALS

Required texts:

Gordon A.A. and Gordon D.L.(2013). *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, Lynne Rienner, 5th (Please, note you should use the fifth edition of this book) (henceforth UCA)

The Dark Child: The Autobiography of an African Boy by Camara Laye

Additional course materials :

Other required class material will be available on the UF Canvas system, and will include chapters, books, journal articles and films. The videos shown in class are part of the class material on which you may be tested. If you miss class in which a video is shown, it is your responsibility to watch the video.

COURSE FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS

Readings are to be completed PRIOR to the course period for which they are assigned. Students should be prepared to refer to readings during class. Pay close attention to the EXACT PAGES indicated in the posted readings and course communications. Course readings rely on carefully selected extracts from longer works in addition to the main textbook.

Students will also be required to conduct independent research and come prepared to share their findings on dates specified in the syllabus.

Attendance is mandatory and participation in class and small group discussions is expected. This class relies on student participation. Students are expected to be present for all class meetings. Any absence will require an official excuse and associated documentation. Reasonable accommodation will be provided in case of excused absence per UF regulations. Students who must miss class due to COVID quarantine will be treated as though they are absent from class because of any other illness.

Zoom Etiquette

Do not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.

When attending a Zoom class or meeting:

- Zoom in on time or a few minutes early if possible. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class session.
- **Your webcam must remain on throughout the class hour.**
- During class session, set yourself on mute unless you want to speak or you are called upon to minimize interference.
- If you want to speak, you can raise your hand during lecture or share openly during discussion.
- When you are assigned to a breakout room, enable your webcam and microphone so that your partners may hear and see who they are working with.
- Alert your instructor as soon as possible if you experience technical difficulties. A “chat” can be sent at any moment during a Zoom session if, for example, you find that your webcam or microphone are not functioning properly. *For any technical difficulties, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk (352-392-4357).*
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/media/elearningufl.edu/zoom/How-to-Join-a-Meeting.pdf>
- Follow the same rules of respectful interaction as you would in a face-to-face course. This is especially important in a remote situation, where multiple voices attempting to speak at once result in no one being heard. Netiquette guidelines are expected to be followed and can be found at
<http://teach.ufl.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>.

COURSE REQUIRMENTS

Your final evaluation is based on the following components:

- Attendance and participation (25%)
- Map Quiz (15%)
- Paper Topic (participation points)
- Paper and Presentation (35%)
- Final Test (25%)

Each component/assignment will be given a percentage grade. After calculating the weighted average of such grades, the final grade will be assigned according to the table:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
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Tot %	94- 100	90- 93	87- 89	83- 86	80- 82	77- 79	73- 76	70- 72	67- 69	63- 66	60- 62	<60
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For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points you can consult the appropriate undergraduate catalog web page
<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

- **Attendance and participation (25%):** This is a **synchronous** online course. This course succeeds when students engage with each other and the course material in a positive, informed, and constructive way. Participation in class discussions, and taking responsibility for your role in classroom debates, is key, and contributes to your final score. Readings must be completed prior to the start of every class. Disrespectful class demeanor and inappropriate/unprofessional conduct will be heavily penalized, after a first warning.
- **Map Quiz (15%):** On Thursday, September 9, you will be tested on your knowledge of the names and locations of the sovereign African countries and critical geographic features. Blank maps and the full list of countries will be distributed in advance so that you can practice before the test.
- **A country profile (35%):** Students will be responsible for researching and creating a profile of an African country of their choosing. All students will be expected to present their country profile on December 2 & 7.
- **Final TEST (25%)** will be based on course readings, videos and lectures. It will be a combination of multiple choice, fill-in the blank and other types of questions. It will be held on Tuesday, December 14.
- **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>).

Make-up policy: Assignments should be completed and submitted via Canvas as specified. Any concerns about late assignments or inability to complete course work on time should be discussed with instructor **prior** to the due date. Failure to communicate will result in grade reduction unless the student submits an official excuse from Academic Advisor, Dean of Students Office, or a Health Professional. 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>.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA POLICIES

Academic Honesty

The University places a high premium on academic honesty. Accordingly, severe penalties are imposed for plagiarism and other instances of deception or fraud. The university's policies regarding intellectual

honesty are detailed in the Academic Honesty Guidelines, printed in full in the current Undergraduate Catalog.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal or lacking clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary.

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; www.counsel.ufl.edu (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, www.hsc.ufl.edu (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Students with Disabilities Act

The Dean of Students Office coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faulty-student disability related issues. Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066, www.dso.ufl.edu.

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 Lombardi 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!

Class schedule:

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

Class Meeting	Readings	Assignments & Activities
UNIT 1 : African Societies, Economies and Religions		
Week 1: Introductions – Perspectives on Africa		
Tuesday, August 24	Course Overview	
Thursday, August 26	J&J Comaroff (South Africa)	
Week 2: (Imagined) Landscapes – Natural Resources and Geography		
Tuesday August 31	UCA, Ch. 2 Pp 9 -24 AGC, Introduction	
Thursday, September 2	Fisher	
Week 3 : Pre-Colonial, Conlonial and Slave Histories		
Tuesday, September 7	UCA Ch. 3 AGC Ch. 4	
Thursday, September 9		Film : <i>La Noiure de...</i> (Senegal) Map Quiz
Week 4: Contemporary States and Politics		
Tuesday, September 14	UCA. Chs. 4 & 6	
Thursday, September 16		Guest Lecture
Week 5: Cultural Diversity - African Languages & Aesthetics		
Tuesday, September 21	Guest lecture – Charles Bwenge	Language puzzle
Thursday, September 23		Harn Museum
Week 6: Cultural Diversity – Religion		
Tuesday, September 28	UCA Ch. 11 Evans Pritchard	
Thursday, September 30		Film : <i>I am not a witch</i> (Zambia)
Week 7: Family, Kinship and Social Life in Africa		

Tuesday, October 5	UCA Ch. 12 Laye 1-92	
Thursday, October 7	Laye 93-188	
Week 8: Economies and Development - Approaches		
Tuesday, October 12	UCA Ch. 5	
Thursday, October 14	Ferguson (Lesotho)	
Week 9 : Economies and Development – Gender & Health		
Tuesday, October 19	UCA Ch. 10 AGC Ch. 9	
Thursday, October 21		Activity
Week 10: Economies and Development – Environment		
Tuesday, October 26	UCA Ch. 8 AGC Ch. 11	
Thursday, October 28		Activity
Week 11: Population, Urbanization and Migration		
Tuesday, November 2	UCA Ch. 7 Pieterse	
Thursday, November 4		Film : <i>Anbessa</i> (Ethiopia)
Week 12 : Aesthetics – Arts & Architecture		
Tuesday, November 9	Everything dey Scatta (Nigeria) Turning Livelihoods to Waste (South Africa)	Waste Activity
Thursday, November 11 UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY		
Week 13: Technology and Communication		
Tuesday, November, 16	AGC Ch. 6	
Thursday, November 18	Oduro-Frimpong (Ghana)	Music Activity
Week 14: African Futures		
Tuesday, November 23	UCA Ch. 13	
November 24-26 THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Week 15:		

Tuesday, November 30		Review & Workshop
Thursday, December 2		Final Presentations
Week 16 :		
Tuesday, December 7		Final Presentations
December 9-10 READING DAYS		
FINAL EXAM		