ALS/History 104 – Fall 2010
Introduction to African History
IRC 8, 12-1:15 TuTh
SYLLABUS AND READINGS

Catalog Description: An introduction to African history from antiquity to the present. Ancient and medieval trading empires, the impact of the slave trade and colonialism are all treated along with some attention to current issues in Africa. Offered every semester (LA, S, HO2).

(P) ALS/HIST 104 Packet of reprinted documents, folktales, essays & news stories. 
(V) video (A) Angel postings

Scope & Purpose: This course explores the rich narratives of Africa’s past through readings, lectures, discussions, and audiovisual material. Rather than striving for exhaustive coverage, we will explore several themes: the Idea of Africa; Africa’s role in world history; environmental influences on African History; characteristic institutions in various regions; intellectual & political achievements of major African states; key features of pre-colonial, colonial, & post colonial eras in Africa; and constructions of social identity in Africa.

Course Outcomes:
1. Students will acquire a familiarity with the main currents of African History: *major themes, *differences in historical eras, *an awareness of Africa’s position in world history; & *its grand ruptures: e.g. slave trade, colonialism.
2. Students will be able to think critically about African history: they will learn to identify underlying assumptions in historical analysis, and also varied intellectual perspectives and bias.
3. Students will be able to identify and evaluate the merits of different historical sources.
4. Students will develop an ability to evaluate the impact of external politico-economic forces on African societies.
5. Students will become familiar with different African artistic traditions and indigenous knowledge production.

"Hanà wani, hanà kâi." (If one refuses another, one refuses oneself, i.e., what goes around comes around) [Hausa proverb-Nigeria]
"God has given us mules, but no roads to ride on." [Amhara proverb-Ethiopia]
"One man cannot build a house, but ten men can easily build twenty houses." [Nubian proverb-Sudan]

Approaches to the topics & readings:
I. We will emphasize themes, re-occurring responses by diverse peoples to similar politico-economic circumstances, and different cultural techniques for interpreting reality. The themes go beyond local events to examine recurrent patterns of historical change that have affected the whole continent.
II. Thus, students should focus on selected factual examples as they illustrate significant trends. This approach requires students to pay close attention to initial lectures to identify ‘key’ themes.
III. The assignments will test students’ efforts to draw these themes together in a coherent understanding of how and why people in Africa developed the economies and cultures they did.
IV. Students are responsible for following the course along three (3) mutually reinforcing paths which balance knowledge about ‘what happened’ with a general understanding of ‘how & why African peoples developed their lives’ as they did. The format comprises:

* (1) Lectures focus on general concepts, themes, & patterns, and illustrate general points with examples or case studies. The lectures do not comprehensively cover ‘what happened,’ rather they contain the conceptual language of the course. In class videos & maps supplement as the visual language.
* (2) Readings, (Shillington’s text & 104 document packet) present factual material, the course’s vocabulary.
Relevant readings are to be completed before we discuss each topic in class.

*(3) Other texts & the packet of readings help students learn about ‘technical’ problems historians face in reconstructing African history, i.e., using “oral traditions,” archaeology, genetic data, folktales, proverbs, and material arts as well as documents/written sources. The methods of history comprise the grammar.

* Students who integrate these 3 aspects of the course should develop an intelligent understanding of what people in Africa have made of their lives & improve their analytic skills to understand other kinds of history.]

Week/Topic: approx 1 week per topic

(1) 8/26. Africa and the World: past and present. A snapshot of Africa’s complex present as a prelude to an examination of its past. Images of Africa’s present, myths of Africa’s past. History as knowledge production. Be prepared to discuss your assumptions about Africa and history in general.

Shillington, ch. 1; (P) 104 Packet, #1-2

(2) 8/31 Mapping Africa -- ecology past and present: water resources; deserts, vegetation; climate and disease. Human origins and the beginning of community (25,000-5,000 BCE), settled society (5000-1000 BCE). African families & other collectivities. Evolving institutions and common social patterns. Be prepared to discuss environmental influences on African history.

Shillington, ch. 1; (P) 104 Packet, #3

(3) 9/7 Ancient Africa in World History. The challenge of agriculture. Ancient Egypt (3500-500BCE): culture, economy & technology. Africa & the debate about the origins of western civilization. Be prepared to discuss the varied sources of ancient history.

Shillington, ch. 2-4; (V) 104 Packet # 4 (Pyramid text)


Shillington, ch. 5; (P) 104 Packet # 5-8 (Pyramid txt, Ezana, Solomon & Sheba)


Be prepared to discuss oral traditions as history sources & to discuss Islam’s role in Africa’s history.

Shillington, ch.9-10; (P) 104 Packet # 9-11; (V) Caravans of Gold/Keita


European Slave Trade and West Africa to 1800—The rise of the South Atlantic slave trade. The impact of the slave trade on Africa’s societies & economies. Abolition & the decline of the slave trade. Be prepared to discuss why the slave trade is important to Africa & world history. Explain slavery’s legacy in Africa. REACTION PAPER # 2 (slavery/slave trade narratives) due Thurs.Oct 7th

Shillington, 12, 13, 16; (P) 104 Packet # 12-14 (slave trade accts, memoirs)

(7) 10/12-Building New States/Imagining New Societies. New state formations:“western colonial settler” states v. indigenous formations. Be prepared to discuss: “abolition,” & western v. African ideas about state structures. Be familiar with examples from West Africa [Sierra Leone & Liberia: Western settler states];
**Southern Africa - Cape Colony, the mfecane & Zulu expansion; & W. Sudan -jihadic new states.**

**READINGS:** Shillington, ch. 15, 16 & 18

(P) 104 packet # 15-18 (nat’l origins)

(V) Liberia: stepchild of slave trade (V) Shaka Zulu (excerpt)

**8) 10/19. Imperialism, the Partition of Africa & Theories of “new” imperialism. Their application to the “scramble for Africa,” at the Berlin Conference (1884-85). 19th c “ideas” of Africa and discourses of racism & imperialism.**

Shillington, ch. 20-21 (P) 104 Packet # 19 (Euro inventions of Africa)

(V) “Sara Baartman” + “Magnificent African Cake” (10 min)


Shillington, ch. 22-23 (H) 104 Packet # 20-21 (V) Africans: tools of exploitation

**(10)11/2. Nationalism & pan-Africanism** between World War I & WW II. Varieties of resistance to colonial domination. Work of the pan-African Congresses, nègritude writers and nationalist consciousness. Be prepared to discuss accommodation and resistance to colonialism as both “material” and “ideological,” & to define “nationalism.”

Shillington, ch. 24 (V) Afr. Soldiers, Great War (5 min.) + Africa, WWII (15 min.)

**(11) 11/9. Independence Movements : political decolonization.** Case studies of Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal & Kenya. Be prepared to discuss why: 1) WWII was a turning point in African History; the sources historians use to reconstruct this era; & the varied meanings of decolonization. **REACTION PAPER #4 Th. Nov 18th**

**Shillington, ch 22-25** (V) Africa: nationalism (excerpt)

**(12) 11/16. The Cold War and global politics 1950-90:** Super power rivalry & the atomic age. National liberation wars in Angola, Mozambique, & Zimbabwe. **Cold War & the anti-apartheid struggle** in South Africa. Be prepared to discuss why & how the Cold War structured decolonization in southern Africa. **Shillington, ch. 22 & 27** (V) Viva Mandela!


**Shillington, ch. 28-29 (P) 104 # 26-28 (V) An African Martyr:Saro-Wiwa**


(V) Jit (excerpt) (V) You Africa/Y.N’Dour + Amandla!

**15. Review: Myths and history in Africa. Why do misperceptions persist. How do we use history to evaluate the present?**

**REACTION PAPER # 5 Turn in at Finals/last class, Tues. Dec. 14th, 2pm, IRC # 8.**

**Course etiquette:**

1. **Readings should be completed before the class which covers them.** All **assignments** are expected **on time.** Late papers are penalized 5% per day and will be accepted up to 1 week late. Make up exams are available only by prior arrangement & due to an **emergency.**
2. **Students are expected to come to class on time and remain in class** unless there is an emergency. Please be courteous. Traffic in and out of the classroom after class has begun is DISRUPTIVE. If you are ill or need the toilet, leave class, but please do not return.

3. Please confine conversation in class to course matters. No laptops, ipods or cell phones on in class

   If you ignore this rule you will be asked to leave.

4. **Attendance** is factored into grades & is taken each class. Per college policy, if ¼ classes missed in 1st month, students will be involuntarily withdrawn. If last 3 weeks’ classes are missed, the final is withheld.

5. **Participation in discussion** is integral to learning & will be graded (10%) as: (a) active & frequent; (b) consistent participation; (c) present with occasional response; (d) irregular presence/irrelevant participation; & (f) repeated absence or inattention.

   * If you are registered with SDS/Stud. Disability Serv & need special consideration for exams or class, please submit the paperwork to me when the course begins.

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**Getting the best grade:** Requirements for superior achievement in the course (an A) include:

1. No unexplained absences over three
2. Readings before class, participating in discussion;
3. Well written papers: concise, grammatically correct, and well argued (62% of the grade).

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**Evaluation Criteria for Papers/Essays = 1) relevance to questions 2) supporting points made with evidence 3) grounding the discussion in the necessary context; 4) insight & originality; 4) organization & presentation, including attention to style, grammar & spelling; & 5) accurate use of quotations & referencing/endnotes.**

*Be familiar with campus plagiarism policy. See ALS website—“avoiding plagiarism.”

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**I. Papers:**

1. **2 short papers** [30% grade] (4-5 pages, double spaced, 12 point font only).

**II. Exams:**

    Th. Oct 14th = **Mid-Term**, Mixed Format
    Final Tu. Dec 14th, 2pm is Reaction Paper # 5, a country analysis [8%] pm, IRC # 8.

**III. Reaction Papers:** [5 x 8% =40% grade].

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**IV. Due dates:**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 14th</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #1</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 23rd</td>
<td><em>Sundiata</em> paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 7th</td>
<td>Reaction Paper #2</td>
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<td>Oct 14th</td>
<td><em>Midterm</em></td>
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<td>Nov 4th</td>
<td>Reaction Paper # 3</td>
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<td>Nov 18th</td>
<td>Reaction Paper # 4</td>
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<td>Dec 2nd</td>
<td>Critique of <em>A Long Way Home</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 14th</td>
<td>Final = Reaction Paper #5</td>
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<td>attendance/participation</td>
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**Emergency Evacuation/Shelter–in-Place Procedures**

In the event of an emergency evacuation (i.e., fire or other emergency), classes meeting in this building are directed to reassemble at [Fine Arts Theater] so that all persons can be accounted for. Complete details of the College’s emergency evacuation, shelter-in-place and other emergency procedures can be found at [http://www.oneonta.edu/security/](http://www.oneonta.edu/security/).